



파그마의 후에

MAYA & MARU GAME FANTASY STORY

박새날 게임 판타지 장편소설

OVERGEARED

BOOK 09

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Overgeared

(템빨)

by

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Synopsis

Shin Youngwoo has had an unfortunate life and is now stuck carrying bricks on construction sites. He even had to do labor in the VR game, Satisfy!

However, luck would soon enter his hapless life. His character, 'Grid', would discover the Northern End Cave for a quest, and in that place, he would find 'Pagma's Rare Book' and become a legendary class player...

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Chapter 801

‘This can’t continue.’

Goldhit anxiously watched Grid and made a hard decision after deliberating for quite some time.

‘I have to release the lightning god.’

The lightning god, powered by the huge thunder stone discovered in the northwest forest of Titan 15 years ago, was a guardian that was the culmination of Goldhit’s knowledge, magic, and a huge amount of funding and manpower. Like the other guardians in the Tower of Eternity, it had basic resistance to physical attacks and also combined a magician’s magic power with the brute force of a solo number knight.

While it could only operate within the parameters of the Tower of Eternity, it was the strongest weapon that could advance the empire’s ‘Pioneer the East Continent’ project if its mass production project succeeded. In fact, Emperor Juander had huge expectations for the lightning god.

Goldhit opened the lid of the device powered by the thunder stone, awakening the lightning god.

“Never.” Goldhit gave an order, “You should never kill him.”

A guardian didn’t show up on the 32nd floor, just like what happened on the 21st floor. Bookshelves crammed with books filled the endless space, and magicians sitting around in various places were indulging themselves in knowledge through them.

‘Is there a magic that can arbitrarily adjust the size of the space?’

The Tower of Eternity had different dimensions for each floor. Some floors were hard to measure, like the 32nd floor, while some floors were less than 300 square meters. The inner structure of the

Tower of Eternity couldn't be imagined just from observing its exterior. The building was so vast that Grid felt that he was exploring another world.

"Overgeared King, I will guide you."

The stairs to the next floor couldn't be seen anywhere? A magician approached Grid while he was looking for the way to go. Grid soon arrived on the 33th floor, thanks to his guide.

'From here on out, it is real.'

From the 33rd floor on, the compensation for climbing a floor increased: instead of two, Grid's intelligence rose by three each time he climbed a floor. If he could keep up this momentum and reach the 80th floor, it wouldn't be much longer before he could learn Fireball.

Grid was busy thinking.

Creak.

He opened the door and came across a guardian in a form he hadn't seen before. A humanoid guardian, with a body covered in gold. Its red eyes, pointed chin, and three horns were all threatening. The most striking feature of the guardian before him was the electric current that danced across the humanoid body. The pale blue light of the electricity intermittently flashed in and out as the dust in the atmosphere was burned away.

Step.

The lightning god—the humanoid guardian that caused minor explosions with the lightning around it—looked just as threatening as its name.

Step.

Taking one or two steps towards Grid, the Guardian narrowed the distance between them in an instant. The outstretched hand wrapped around Grid's head and slammed it into the ground.

Kwaaaaang!

“Kuk...!”

It was even faster than the lilith guardian! Grid couldn't respond to the unpredictable speed and groaned on the floor, suffering a total of 4,230 damage. More than half the damage was lightning damage.

“God Hands!”

Grid had been fighting with his own strength the whole time, and shouted for the first time in the fight. The four God Hands appeared in response to the call, wielding Mjolnir. It didn't reach, however, due to the lightning god's magic. When one of its horns shone blue, an electrical barrier was created that enveloped its whole body, demonstrating the power to block physical attacks. The hands that hit the electricity barrier stiffened at the same time. The electric barrier wasn't just protective, it also had the ability to reflect damage that it received.

Kwaaaaang!

Grid's face was buried in the ground. Swinging his sword behind him, flames were released, hitting the lightning god's arm. In fact, they were the black flames that were considered as a physical attack. The lightning god wasn't damaged, just like the other guardians.

Grid wielded his sword again until finally, the flames emission was activated. Grid was able to escape from the lightning god's hands and started a counterattack.

“Pagma's Swordsmanship, Link!”

Grid used the fast attack speed to release flames several times.

[You have dealt 4,100 damage to the target!]

[You have dealt 4,100...]

[You have dealt 4,100...]

....

...

It was said that there was no perfect existence. The lightning god overwhelmed the lilith guardian in all aspects: from speed, to destructive power, to magic. However, it had relatively ordinary fire resistance.

Only.

‘Its health is high.’

The lightning god’s health gauge was still high, despite being hit by 10 or more fire emissions. This wasn’t due to the lightning god’s fire resistance, but to the limit of the fire’s basic damage. The lightning god spread its legs apart and let out a roar.

Grid saw it open its firmly closed mouth and remembered the boss monster he encountered before the golems had invaded Reinhardt. He knew it. Magic power started to concentrate in the mouth of the lightning god. The mass of golden magic power would soon be shot at Grid.

This was its goal? Grid judged that the difficulty was different from the past and performed a sword dance. The lightning god released the magic power, which shot out in a straight line towards Grid. Goldhit was convinced after seeing this through the crystal ball.

‘Now Grid will use magic.’

Grid’s skills were much higher than previously rumored, but it wasn’t enough to deal with the lightning god. The destructive power of the lightning god, which combined the magic power of a magician and the strength of a solo number knight, was overwhelming.

“Don’t delay any more and show me the enhanced magic...!” Goldhit shouted excitedly.

She overlooked one fact in her zealousness, however. While it was true that the lightning god combined the magic power of a magician and the strength of a solo number knight, it didn't have the ability to use a variety of spells like a great magician.

“Revolve.”

Not only that, the lightning god didn't have the excellent swordsmanship of a solo number knight, meaning that it fell behind in techniques. To a veteran like Grid, who had fought against all kinds of legends, including the Undefeated King, the lightning god was just a child with great strength.

Grid counterattacked with Revolve and returned the attack back to the lightning god. The lightning god didn't have the skill to cope with the technique that exceeded its speed.

“Noe!”

“Nyaaaaong! It is finally this body's turn!”

As the level of Grid's opponents increased, Noe had fewer and fewer opportunities to play an active role. The recent enemies didn't even allow Noe to get close, meaning the power of Soul Ingestion couldn't be used.

“Nyahahat! Look at the greatness of the best demonic beast of hell!”

The lightning god was different. According to its input data, the lightning god didn't bother to be cautious of a 'cat.' It had suffered a great deal of damage due to Grid's counterattack, and ignored the approaching cat. It concentrated only on Grid.

The result? Noe's wide mouth opened and swallowed the lightning god. Soul Ingestion was triggered.

[The memphis Noe has taken half the power of the magic weapon 'Lightning God.']

[Your intelligence will increase by 3,113 for 3 seconds!]

[You have understood the knowledge and magic of Braham.]

[The skill Fireball (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Dark Cutter (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Chain Lightning (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Enchant Weapon (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Decoy (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Ice Spear (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Mana Jamming (Enhanced) can be used.]

If the foolish Grid acquired a variety of magic, they wouldn't work properly, and would just cause confusion instead. Braham left behind magic that he judged as necessary for Grid. In fact, Grid only now realized that as his intelligence rose, Braham's knowledge flowed into his head and he could grasp it.

"Decoy."

A bird-shaped mass of mana was summoned.

Flap.

The bird flapped its wings and flew to the ceiling. The lightning god escaped from Noe's mouth and chased the bird with its eyes. The lightning god entered the mouth of a cat that it didn't take seriously. It wasn't aware of its weakened state, but it was attracted by the decoy. It was only for a moment.

"Mana Jamming."

Except for Grid's mana, all of the mana in the area became confused. The mana in the air scattered, the lightning god's mana reversed and stopped. The moment that it fell towards the ground.

"Ice Spear."

A sharp spear of ice that was two metres long was created by Grid's side. It was shockingly beautiful.

[Ice Spear (Enhanced) Lv. 1]

Deals 10,000 fixed damage and additional damage in proportion to your intelligence. Ignores the magic resistance of the target.

The target that is hit will be subjected to the 'frozen' state. The target that is frozen will receive two times the damage from an additional ice spear.

Mana Consumption: 2,500

Skill Cooldown Time: 1 minute.

The target of the ice spear was obvious.

Kuuong!

The lightning god crashed to the ground.

Puk!

[You have dealt 23,900 damage to the target!]

A giant ice spear pierced its back and it was temporarily paralyzed. The wounded area was frozen. It wriggled around. The transparent ice spears appeared and multiplied. From the moment he used Decoy, Grid also used Alarm + Ice Spear.

Puk!

The lightning god's health plummeted as it was pierced, frozen, broken, pierced, frozen, broken, etc. Goldhit's face became pale as she watched the scene before her. She couldn't help being nervous at the thought of losing the lightning god, which she had spent nine years developing and producing.

However, there was a bigger problem.

"I-I can't understand..."

Goldhit couldn't get a single hint about the enhanced magic like she wanted. Goldhit realized. The reason that she couldn't receive the enhanced magic was because Braham was transcendent, not because she was ignorant.

There was one questionable part. Grid must be a genius to have inherited Braham's magic.

“Grid...! You are a perfect existence...!!”

It was the moment when the best magician on the continent respected and envied Grid. And...

“Haaaack! Too delicious nyong!” Noe became really excited and ate the remnants of the lightning god.

At the same time, in the imperial palace.

“Kuk...! Kuaaah...!”

First Knight Mercedes was trying to appeal to lift her suspension.

“Kuaaaaack!” Gyuratan screamed.

The destruction of the lightning god damaged the thunder stone that was situated on the top floor of the Tower of Eternity.

“Your Majesty!”

Mercedes knew Gyuratan's true identity and paled. She moved earlier than anyone else. Despite the fact that she wasn't allowed to equip her swords and armor, she threw herself to the emperor's side to protect him.

“Kuhuk...! Huhuhu!”

Gyuratan no longer hid his demonic energy.

Mercedes and Gyuratan were bewildered. They never expected the situation to change so rapidly!

Chapter 802

“Unbelievable...!”

It wasn't Goldhit's exclamation. She had gotten a shock when she lost the lightning god and was now in a stunned state. No, it was Grid who made the surprised sound after Noe absorbed the remnants of the lightning god. Grid had no choice but to be surprised.

[The memphis Noe has taken half the power of the magic weapon 'Lightning God.']

[Your intelligence will increase by 3,113 for 3 seconds!]

[The memphis Noe has taken half the power of the magic weapon 'Lightning God.']

[Your intelligence will increase by 3,113 for 3...]

[The memphis Noe has taken half the power of the magic weapon...]

.....

.....

It was due to the notification windows that kept rising up as Noe swallowed the lightning god. That's right. Noe was a predator. As the aggro of the lightning god was drawn by Grid and his magic, Noe had been hanging onto its leg and eating. Thanks to this, the durations of Soul Ingestion and Soul Transference were constantly updated, and Grid could maintain his transcendent power.

'This is the first time.'

[Soul Ingestion Lv. 1]

[Has the ability to take away half of the target's highest stats and transfer it to your master.

Skill Cooldown Time: Your own decision.]

[Scratch Lv. 1]

[Your paws will attack and poison the target.

Skill Cooldown Time: Whenever you like.]

These were the descriptions of Noe's skills. They were simple but fraudulent. Grid was the only one who knew that Noe had no cooldown for his active skills. This was why he was the best demonic beast of hell that even great demons loved. However, Grid had never been able to witness Noe's fraudulent ability. There had been rare times when Noe continuously used Scratch. However, there was never a single instance of continuously using Soul Ingestion. Therefore...

'I forgot.'

The fact that Noe had no cooldown on his skills had been completely erased from Grid's mind.

Lick lick!

"..."

Noe was eating deliciously. His chubby butt moved from side to side as he chewed on the remnants of the lightning god with wet eyes. He was so pleased that he was even shedding tears. Grid made a hypothesis, 'The reason why Noe didn't continuously use Soul Ingestion...'

Was it because the targets Noe ate so far hadn't suited his taste?

'That's why he ate in moderation? Ah, it can't be.'

Grid was shaking when he heard Noe's voice.

"Master! Too delicious, nyong! I can keep going even if I'm full!"

"..."

The hypothesis seemed to fit. Grid sighed. He was very sad. When Grid was in danger, this selfish cat had acted less often because the food wasn't delicious?

“A beast is a beast...”

A beast was only faithful to their instincts!

Tsk tsk. Grid clicked his tongue and searched the area in case the lightning god had dropped any items. He was also faithful to the animalistic instinct of greed. Unfortunately, the lightning god hadn't dropped any items. The only thing left was the body. It was the same as the previous guardians.

“They should at least give me something.”

Grid's gratitude for the intelligence he acquired every time he cleared a new floor was already being diluted. The greedy Grid was now hoping for more. Did he read his master's mind?

“Nyang...! Nyaaaaong!” Out of nowhere, Noe stood up on his hind legs. Then he moved his front paws from left to right like a bear, roaring in a threatening manner.

...Perhaps 100 out of 100 people would say that it was cute. However, something serious was happening to Noe.

“W-What? What happened?”

Was his stomach upset from eating like a pig? Grid rushed to Noe with worry and stroked Noe's protruding belly. “Do you think your stomach will burst? Do you want to puke?”

“Nyaaaaong!” Noe shook his head. It was a strong denial.

Grid saw the pink soles of Noe's feet and asked again, “Then what are you doing all of a sudden? Did you go crazy?”

“Kyaong! I am the best demonic beast of hell! Master is the crazy person, nyong!”

“...”

Was this a rebellion? Grid was confused by Noe's actions and retreated backward. There was a flash around Noe's body! It was a brilliant and intense light. It hurt Grid's eyes, and he was forced to turn his head away.

‘What...?’

It didn’t take long for the light to gradually lose its momentum. Grid confirmed it and looked at Noe. Then he got a shock. “N-Noe!!”

“Nya...! Nyaaaaong!”

Like a pooing baby, Noe’s legs were up, and he was screaming. He was changing. Noe’s black fur began to brighten while the small horns on his forehead split into two.

“Nyaaaaong!” Noe let out a strong roar that was different from the past. His now longer and brighter fur turned golden, and his head became slightly more rounded. Noe’s white horns had been split in two and were now smaller than before. The change was easily expressed.

“...Why have you become cuter?”

That’s right. Noe’s transformation made him even cuter and more lovable. It wasn’t an exaggeration to call him beautiful. He was a perfect pet that anyone would want to have. Noe seemed to be a species that had improved over several generations to meet humanity’s sense of beauty.

It was difficult to call him a ‘demonic beast’ of hell. Perhaps it was a deterioration? Had Noe’s body worsened after overeating?

Grid was wrapped in anxiety. Then he noticed something strange. There were sparks flying around Noe’s body. They were like the sparks that had wrapped around the lightning god. Then a notification window popped up.

[The memphis ‘Noe’ has succeeded in the evolution!]

[Name: Noe

Species: Memphis

Level: 1 (0/10,000)

Affinity: 100/100

Health: 10,000/10,000

Physical Attack Power: 160

Magic Attack Power: 160

Defense: 160

Magic Resistance: 160

Attribute: Dark, Lightning

Status: Narcissistic

(I will further develop, nyang! I will make myself stronger like the best demonic beast of hell! Nyahahahat!!)

Skills: Fluidization (S), Scratch (S), Soul Ingestion (SSS), Lightning Discharge!! (SSS)]

[Discharge!! Lv. 1]

[The electricity will be turned on when something other than your master approaches. Attacks up to 10 enemies with 10 times the magic damage, and there is a very high chance of causing electrical shock.

Cooldown Time: None]

“...”

It was an enormous evolution. Noe's stats were now overwhelmingly high compared to when Grid first got him. They were three to six times higher. Yes, compared to when he first got Noe... Compared to level 1...

“Nyahahat! Master! Isn't this body cool, nyong? It is enough to be captivated!” Noe was filled with pride. He licked his chest fur with a short red tongue.

The temples of the silent Grid twitched. “...Is this a joke?”

“Nyang?”

“Why...? Why?! Why did you reset to level 1?”

This was an excuse, but he had gotten the Overgeared Skeletons so late that it was hard to level them up. The enemies that Grid faced were too strong for the Overgeared Skeletons. In order to train the Overgeared Skeletons, he would have to move to a novice hunting area, but Grid didn't have enough time for this.

However, Noe was different. Noe had been with Grid from early on, and they had grown together. Recently, Noe's level had reached as high as level 300. Now, it had been reset to level 1. The thousands in stat points had fallen to hundreds, making it an obvious deterioration.

Of course, Noe's potential was much higher now. However, Grid couldn't help thinking that the past few years had been in vain. Grid couldn't understand the terrible reality and mourned for the loss.

"It's okay, Master. Feed me a lot of delicious food like today, and I will quickly become stronger again. Cheer up, nyong. Treat me to delicious food!"

"...Delicious like today?"

Grid suddenly recalled the information of a mineral.

[Thunder Stone]

[A mineral that is produced only when the great demon, Astaroth, is present in the human world.]

The lightning attribute can be given to an item, and it is also good for feeding to demonic beasts.

The demonic beast will be very pleased when fed.

Weight: 5]

"..."

A few years ago, Grid fought with Prince Ren of the Eternal Kingdom. Grid had defeated Eternal's first archer Ferrel and won the Thunder Bow. The Thunder Bow was a solid weapon passed

down through Ferrel's family. However, it then met Grid, and Grid had disassembled it without caring. As a result, he obtained three thunder stones.

The description of the mineral said that 'demonic beasts' would like it, but Grid had never thought of feeding the thunder stones to Noe. That was natural. It wasn't a question of affection but an extremely normal attitude. Who in the world would throw away a precious mineral that was only produced when a great demon appeared in the world?

...Especially to an animal that was quick to die.

'...No, Nyangmong would do it. Ah?'

Something flashed in Grid's head. The thunder stone was a symbol of Astaroth's emergence, and it was here in the empire.

"Then Gyuratan is..."

...Astaroth. Grid had a poor mind and came to this conclusion late.

'Dispose of the thunder stone.'

Grid knew from his past experience with Hell Gao that destroying the thunder stone located at the top of the magic tower would weaken Gyuratan's power, and weakening Gyuratan was a sure way to save Mercedes from her crisis.

"Noe! Come eat!"

"Nyang?"

There was no hesitation once his purpose was clear. Grid immediately ran to the staircase leading upstairs. There was someone waiting for him.

"I am pleased to see the Overgeared King."

It was a child, a young girl who looked four or five years old. Grid identified the name of the girl who greeted him politely and was shocked. "Goldhit...?"

Magician king... The identity of the strongest magician right now was a little girl? Grid felt something beyond confusion.

At this moment, there were people even more confused than Grid at the imperial palace...

“Demonkin...? How dare a mere demonkin break into the palace!”

‘Kuk...! Why are those greedy magicians messing around with the thunder stone?’ It was Gyuratan, the Great Demon Astaroth. As his identity was revealed, Mercedes accepted this moment as a chance, though she still didn’t know that it was caused by Grid.

However, a big chance was accompanied by great danger. Mercedes wasn’t wearing armor or holding a weapon, so she couldn’t withstand Gyuratan’s assault. Gyuratan blew away the knights and cut at Mercedes’ chest.

“Mercedes?” The emperor uttered.

He had persecuted her, yet she was defending him? The emperor’s eyes shook as blood filled his vision.

Chapter 803

“Kid.”

The girl on the stairs was really small and didn't even reach Grid's waist. Grid couldn't accept the name that floated above the girl's head. Goldhit? It was ridiculous that this girl could be the magician king.

“What is your name? Why are you in a place like this? Where did your parents go?”

The girl made a guileless expression. Simultaneously, laughter emerged from her that was far from innocent. It was reminiscent of an old lady's laugh. “Yohoho... I am Goldhit. Some people call me the magician king.”

“...Is this real?” Grid could no longer deny reality and his mouth dropped open. Where was the appearance of the old woman who was over 120 years old? Even the elves, famous for their longevity, wouldn't look like this. Grid regained his spirit and asked, “Is this due to magic?”

Goldhit nodded with her plaited red hair moving cutely. “Correct. Magic is an area that creates miracles. I have been constantly trying to obtain the ultimate miracle, and as a result, I look like this now. Yohohoho.”

He should've noticed from the name ‘Tower of Eternity.’ Grid immediately realized what was the ‘ultimate miracle’ that Goldhit wanted.

‘Eternal life...’

However, it went against providence. Grid bet that Goldhit had been pointed at and reprimanded by countless people for all sorts of reasons. Yet Grid didn't reproach her. After all, didn't Grid want Khan to have eternal life, and wasn't he afraid of Irene's death? Grid understood Goldhit's wish.

“Amazing. Using magic to regain youth...”

Goldhit was indeed worthy of being called the magician king. While Grid was admiring her, Goldhit made a subtle expression. “Your Majesty, did you interpret it as regaining youth? Yohoho... You are really pure, unlike what I expected.”

“...?”

They were meaningful words. If Goldhit hadn't regained her youth, then how did she look like she did now? Anxiety settled in his heart as Grid felt a strange incongruity. He felt a sense of rejection toward Goldhit. However, Goldhit didn't give him a chance to think too deeply. “I want to thank you for answering my invitation. It is an honor to be able to host the best hero of our time.”

Her tone didn't match her appearance. She was even standing with her hands behind her back. It seemed that she couldn't abandon the habits of the old.

“Why did you invite me?” Grid asked bluntly. In fact, Grid didn't like Goldhit's emergence as the hidden quest had ended with it.

‘If I had continued with the quest, my intelligence could've reached 2,000 points.’

It was possible based on the progress of the quest and the increase in intelligence given. So, it was disappointing for Grid since he could obtain Fireball (Enhanced) the moment his intelligence exceeded 2,500. Then Goldhit made a shocking suggestion, “Can you take me as your disciple?”

“...??”

The magician king wanted to be his disciple? Grid doubted his ears. “The best magician on the continent wants to learn blacksmithing?”

“No, that is impossible.”

Indeed, he wasn't mistaken.

'I heard wrong.'

He had been straining himself since Khan's death, so he was weary. Should he start taking energy supplements? Grid looked seriously worried about himself. Meanwhile, Goldhit added, "I want to learn magic, not blacksmithing."

"What?" Grid's expression distorted. "Did you invite me here to joke around?"

The best magician on the continent wanted a blacksmith to teach her magic? It was a joke that even an elementary school student wouldn't make.

'Has her brain become younger?' Grid clicked his tongue, not hiding his displeasure. He was the Overgeared King and didn't like Goldhit joking around with him. It was like she was ignoring the Overgeared Kingdom.

Goldhit spoke to the displeased Grid with a gentle expression, "Don't be offended. I'm serious. I want to receive Braham's enhanced magic from Your Majesty."

"...?" Grid was startled. The name 'Braham' had unexpectedly emerged from Goldhit's mouth.

'How?'

Additionally, how did she know that he had learned Braham's magic? Then Grid noticed his mistake.

'Was she watching when I fought the lightning god?'

His opponent was the magician king. The system recognized her as a 'powerhouse of the time.' She wasn't a legend but she could someday become one. If she was that type of person, it was possible for her to see the origin of the magic that Grid had used on the lightning god.

"Of course, I'm not simply asking. If Your Majesty teaches me

magic, you will get something in return.” A cheerful smile appeared on Goldhit’s face. With ruddy skin, freckles, red hair, and round eyes, she was a really lovely girl... At least, when it came to appearance.

“What can I get? What will you do for me if I agree?”

“I have protected the empire through three generations of emperors. It means I am an important person in the empire. I have accumulated enormous wealth and power thanks to my abilities and the halo of the empire.”

“...”

“It is almost almighty. If you want anything, just tell me. I will listen to any request from you. Yohohoho.” It was an irresistible temptation. Goldhit was certain of this.

“The thunder stone,” Grid said what he wanted. “The stone that is on the roof of your tower. Give it to me.”

“...That is a bit too much to ask.” Goldhit frowned for the first time. “You truly are a legendary blacksmith. You know about the thunder stone.”

“It is impossible for me to not know.”

“Then don’t you know that it is an impossible request? The value of the thunder stone is incomparable to anything in the world. It can’t be obtained unless a great demon descends...”

“You know.” Grid cut Goldhit off. “You know that the thunder stone is closely related to a great demon and yet you left it like that without disposing of it? Don’t you know what a great demon can do?”

“The thunder stone is the symbol of Astaroth, one of the great demons who lost his flesh due to Muller and is disqualified from being a great demon. How can he be a big threat?”

“...”

“The thunder stone has enormous magic power. It is a great help to the development of magic and weapons. How can I dispose of such a precious treasure just because of a weakened great demon?”

“Hat!” Grid burst out laughing. Weakened great demon? What would happen if it became known that Astaroth had been playing in the empire for the past decade? One thing was clear. Goldhit’s reputation would nosedive, and her presence in the empire would weaken.

An alarm sounded all over the tower the moment Grid was feeling convinced of this. The magician Raji hurriedly ran over. “Master! Something is happening in the imperial palace!”

“I know.” Goldhit reached out into the air. Then a space similar to the players’ inventory was created, and a white robe popped out. Goldhit put on the robe and looked at Grid. “I have to delay this story for a while.”

‘Yes, go.’ He would smash the thunder stone in the period of time when she wasn’t here. Grid was convinced that the disturbance in the imperial palace was linked to Gyuratan. Goldhit read Grid’s intentions but didn’t feel uneasy. “Stop any silly talk. Nobody can access the thunder stone without my permission. I’ll just get mad at you.”

A large number of traps and five lightning gods were protecting the thunder stone. It was a thorough defense that not even Astaroth could get through.

“I will go and come back. I will solve the problem so that my precious guest won’t wait long. Yohohoho...” Goldhit laughed bizarrely, and the small body in white robes disappeared. Grid waited for her to disappear from view and headed straight upstairs. His destination was naturally the top of the tower. He planned to destroy the thunder stone for Mercedes’ safety and then pick up the wreckage.

However, how could it be that easy? On the next floor, Grid faced

a maze. It was a huge and complicated maze, and he couldn't see a way out. A magician came up to him and said, "Goldhit has asked me to take care of Your Majesty. Now, let's go down. I will serve you respectfully."

"Can't I go up?" Grid refused the friendly magician's offer.

In turn, the magician scoffed, "The Tower of Eternity isn't a place that any dog or cattle can climb."

"I can't see anything with my eyes. Are you a dog?"

"..."

To think that the king of the Overgeared Kingdom and the peak of two billion users was being called a dog or cattle? There was no reason for Grid to endure his anger. He eagerly pulled out the Enlightenment Sword, consuming the fighting energy that had risen during his encounter with Goldhit.

"100,000 Army."

"...?"

"Massacre Sword."

"...!!"

Peng!

Kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa kwa!

The red and purple energy blades penetrated the maze in a straight line. From there, the maze started to collapse, and an explosion occurred in a corner of the Tower of Eternity which had been firmly in place for ages. There was now a small hole in the high tower.

"W-What...?"

Did Grid just blow up a magic trap with force? Furthermore, did he call out 100,000 Army Massacre Sword? It was then that the magician discovered Grid's identity. "T-The Undefeated King's

descend... Keok!”

However, the current Grid wasn't lax. He didn't hesitate to kill the eyewitness and climbed to the next floor.

“Uh...!” Mercedes' scream resonated in the hall. As a matter of fact, Gyuratan had been aiming at Mercedes, not the emperor, from the beginning. It was because he knew that Bain would come out when he reached the emperor. It also meant that Bain wouldn't act unless the emperor was being aimed at.

“Sir Mercedes!” The knights heard the turmoil and were aghast. They roared angrily and came to rescue her from Astaroth.

“Don't move if you want this woman to live.” Gyuratan was holding Mercedes by the neck. She was poisoned by the demonic energy that entered her body through the sword cut.

The knights were stunned while the emperor gave an imperial order, “First Knight, I will allow you to be armed.”

Simultaneously...

“Sir Mercedes!” Two quick-witted knights threw their swords toward Mercedes.

Seokeok!

Two flashes of lights gleamed around Gyuratan's body. “Kuk...!”

They were truly agile movements. Gyuratan trembled as he let go of Mercedes. Mercedes stood before the emperor and tore at the bottom of her blood-stained dress to allow for easier movement. She faced Gyuratan and opened her mouth, “12 years ago, you committed the sin of killing the Red Knights and their families who devoted themselves to the empire.”

“...”

“You have committed the sin of deceiving His Majesty and the empire's people.”

“...”

The reception hall was tense. Gyuratan was dumbfounded while Mercedes was crying.

“...You have committed the sin of placing a stigma on Piaro. I will never forgive you,” Mercedes declared with no fear in her eyes.

Justice would destroy evil.

Chapter 804

Gyuratan was forced to defend against a sword that struck like a lightning bolt and a sword that stung like a bee. Gyuratan's armor was pierced, and he coughed up blood. Mercedes didn't give him time to have a break. In front of her dual swords, Gyuratan's hands and feet were tied up.

‘To a human...!’

“Two Storms.”

Peng!

Pepepepeng!

The swords increased in speed. Mercedes' unique technique, which took advantage of sword energy, assaulted Gyuratan. She attacked and then backed away to a distance of three meters before repeating it. As she wielded her swords, her strikes were light enough to be fast and clean.

“Kuk...!” A groan emerged from Gyuratan's mouth as he defended himself against the swords. It was hard for him to cope with Mercedes' anomalous attacks where the attack distance changed in real time. The fight would be up to here.

‘Indeed!’

Things were flowing as everyone expected. The strength of the Fourth Knight was special since he protected the Red Knights. However, the First Knight was the peak of the Red Knights. The Fourth Knight couldn't be stronger than the First Knight. Mercedes' victory was already decided.

“Ahh...”

“Sir Mercedes...!”

The noble knight defended the emperor who had suppressed her in the past, and she also defended the honor of the old hero whom

everyone had thought was corrupted. This image of Mercedes punishing Gyuratan with her bloody body was imprinted onto the knights. Some knights were so inspired that they started crying. They were happy that their object of admiration existed right beside them.

However, this was the reason why...

Puk!

“...!!”

Mercedes' crash caused a greater impact.

“S-Sir Mercedes!”

Gyuratan discarded swordsmanship. He was a great demon now, not the Fourth Knight. As such, he started to counterattack, and the screams of the knights filled the hall. However, Mercedes couldn't hear anything. Her world was calm as she was caught in the explosion Gyuratan had created.

‘Ah...’ Mercedes' time flowed slowly. Lightning demonic energy rose from Gyuratan's body like a haze. The hall filled with lightning that it couldn't endure, and the emperor was shouting with an expression she had never seen before. Everything was slow. One second was one minute, ten minutes, one hour...

The images of the old heroes passed through Mercedes' mind. Knights wearing red armor... The big backs, dependable smiles, and warm teachings of those who stood at the forefront of the battlefields came to her mind. Mercedes was filled with images of the past as Gyuratan's lightning fist flew toward her.

“Are your eyes bad? How can that be? If you can see through them, feel free to look. There is no darkness or lies in my heart.”

Mercedes' innate vision... Piaro had fully accepted the cursed power which sometimes even caused fear in the parents who had given birth to her. Back then, Mercedes was still young. That's why Mercedes had been able to keep her eyes straight, and Piaro

had been able to look into them without any fear. Nevertheless...

‘I’m so...rry.’ Mercedes hadn’t trusted Piaro. She had given up on him due to the stigma of being a traitor. Everyone had shouted that Piaro was a traitor, and she hadn’t doubted it. ‘I was the traitor.’

Kwaang!

Mercedes smiled bitterly as she fell to the floor. Simultaneously, lightning demonic energy exploded around her body.

“Sir Mercedes!”

“You evil bastard! Stop right now!”

The knights ran to assist Mercedes. Their eyes blazed as they poured out all types of sword techniques. However, Gyuratan’s true power was much stronger than the Gyuratan of their memories.

“It is insulting that humans can even breathe in front of me for a moment.”

Every time this happened, the damn face of Sword Saint Muller popped up. Gyuratan started to concentrate his lightning. Then...

“W-What is this...?”

The knights’ swords and armor—their whole bodies were drawn to the lightning. Resistance was futile. Just like magnets with different electrodes, Gyuratan’s lightning emitted an attraction force that the surrounding metals couldn’t deny. This was why he had suddenly won the battle against Mercedes.

‘The situation is bad.’ Bain’s duty was to only protect the emperor. So, he protected the emperor while thinking about why the great demon had appeared in the middle of the palace. ‘It will be difficult for even me to handle him.’

Great Demon Astaroth... From the time that the thunder stone appeared 15 years ago, the empire had already predicted his emergence. However, it was strange. The longer the survival

period of the great demon, the greater and more powerful the thunder stone became. This meant it was due to sheer greed that they were facing this current situation. However, it was also unexpected that Astaroth would be in the imperial palace.

Bain thought for a while before urging the emperor, “Leave this place while the knights buy time.”

The seven dukes had to govern their respective lands, and their period of stay in the palace was extremely short. They had gathered for the visit of the Overgeared King but returned to their respective estates. Currently, only the Five Pillars could be relied on. However, Bain judged that the rest of them weren’t needed.

It might be difficult for him to deal with Astaroth, but he thought that Goldhit could easily overpower the weakened Astaroth. The emperor thought the same. Great demon? The Overgeared King had managed to hunt one in a complete state. The Overgeared Kingdom was no match for the empire, so it was natural that the powerful empire should be able to easily hunt the weakened great demon.

However, this situation was a problem. The emperor hesitated to leave. It was because he saw Mercedes’ collapsed form. Could she survive until Goldhit arrived? It would be tough. The emperor wanted to know the truth regarding 12 years ago and gave an order, “Bain.”

“Yes.”

“Save Mercedes.”

Bain’s eyes narrowed. He didn’t know why the emperor wanted to save Mercedes when he already hated the existence of the Red Knights. However, it wasn’t Bain’s role to comment on the decision. He just needed to follow orders.

“I understand.”

Supaak!

Bain disappeared from the emperor's right side. The point where he appeared was behind Gyuratan and next to Mercedes.

"Bain...!" Gyuratan cried out as he was handling the knights that were dragged over by the lightning. Bain's presence was so great that it made him wary. However, Bain pulled the ragged Mercedes into his arms and shook his head.

"I don't care about you," he said briefly before trying to leave.

"But I am interested!" Gyuratan obstructed Bain's way. He picked up the knights like they were a ball and threw them toward Bain. Gyuratan couldn't forgive Mercedes. His 15 years of hardships were wasted, and Mercedes was the best target to resolve his anger.

"N...no..."

"Tch."

Bain had been about to cut at the flying ball of knights only to be stopped by Mercedes. He looked at Mercedes holding onto his wrist and took evasive action. However, the moment he was going to disappear and reappear by the emperor's side, Gyuratan's sword came flying.

The sword was aiming for Mercedes in Bain's arms. Bain moved, so he was struck in the shoulder instead as he stabbed back at Gyuratan. It was a counterattack that aimed at Gyuratan's exposed abdomen. However, it didn't reach. This was due to the lightning demonic energy around Gyuratan's body. The demonic energy which had been previously pulling the metal was now pushing it away.

Thanks to this, Bain's sword lost momentum and stopped in the air. Bain clicked his tongue while Gyuratan wielded his sword again.

A fierce battle raged on. Gyuratan's swings gradually accelerated while Bain's movements were gorgeous enough to be considered acrobatics as he used the small shields attached to his shoulders

and wrists to block. Both the emperor and Bain were surprised. Astaroth was too strong to be called a weakened great demon.

‘Was he a high-ranking great demon before?’

It was likely. The great demon that Grid and his allies hunted had been the lowest of the great demons. If Astaroth was a high-level great demon, then he would be stronger than Belial, despite having lost his body.

‘Furthermore...’

The emperor noted that as more time passed, the thunder stone became stronger. Perhaps the growth of the thunder stone meant the growth of the great demon? He thought this far.

“Isn’t Goldhit here yet?”

The emperor was nervous. Then...

‘Am I too late?’ Bain felt Mercedes’ body gradually cooling down. The shadow called death was covering her. At that moment...

Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

A meteorite fell through the ceiling of the great hall. It was Meteor Strike, a spell from the current strongest magician among humans—Goldhit. The spell was lacking compared to Meteor which summoned ‘multiple’ meteorites. Due to the level of the magic, Meteor Strike only summoned a small meteorite.

However, the only magician who was able to use the full Meteor in human history had been Braham. Meteor was the symbol representing the great demons. It was already great for a human to be able to use Meteor Strike, and the spell was powerful enough to break through the impregnable wall.

“Sorry, I’m late. Yohoho...” Beyond the collapsed ceiling, a girl descended from the stormy sky. Her hair fluttered as she attracted everyone’s attention. “Tsk tsk, foolish great demon. I wish you had continued living like you were.”

It was a pity for the thunder stone. Goldhit reached toward Gyuratan who had been hit by the meteorite. Magic power that exceeded the category of a human gathered at her fingertips. However, it was useless unless the magic manifested. A black lightning strike fell from the sky and struck Goldhit. She collapsed without even being able to scream.

Goldhit exited the moment she arrived. A lightning storm was raging, and Astaroth was gradually getting stronger. The pouring rain brought with it despair.

Simultaneously, in the Tower of Eternity...

“What is this...?”

The breakthrough was ridiculously quick compared to the Behen Archipelago. Grid soon arrived at the 79th floor and faced a huge kennel. There were young girls and boys waiting for food like they were livestock, and dirty straw was scattered all over the ground.

“Crazy jerk...!” Grid realized why he felt strangely discomfited during his conversation with Goldhit. Yes, Goldhit hadn’t become younger. She had snatched it away.

“Uwek!”

How long had this taboo been happening? The horrible scene made Grid feel disgusted and nauseous. He pitied the girls and boys who looked at him with expressions that knew nothing, and he developed a hatred for Goldhit.

There was no reason for him to hesitate now. Grid immediately moved to the next floor—the 80th floor. The glass ceiling where the thunder stone was located on the Tower of Eternity attracted Grid’s gaze.

“Discovery.”

“Intruder.”

“Discovery.”

“Repel. Repel. Repel.”

The five lightning gods started operating. Goldhit believed the five lightning gods were the strongest weapons that could defend the thunder stone. However...

“Divinity.”

[Show off the virtues of a blacksmith who deserves to be praised as a god. The casting time and cooldown time of all blacksmithing skills will be removed. It is applicable up to two times whenever the skill is used.]

“Item Combination.”

It wasn't enough to prevent Grid from opening the power he obtained from producing three myth rated items.

Chapter 805

[The heavenly gods can't take their eyes off you. Your dignity can be compared to a god after making three sets of battle gear that even the gods will covet.]

This was the notification window that rose when Grid made the myth rated White Tiger Sword. It was the first of the 'special event' that would happen every time he made three myth rated items. The reward was a skill, Divinity.

[Divinity - Blacksmithing Version]

[-Raises your existence to a level close to a god.]

The casting time and cooldown time of all blacksmithing skills will be removed. It can be used up to two times whenever the skill is activated.]

Resource Consumption: None.

Cooldown Time: 23 hours.]

Grid thought of a number after he got this skill—18. The 'F' word came out. (The pronunciation of 18 in Korea sounds a lot like the F word in Korea.) Think about it. A blacksmith's skills were almost always related to production. So, if Grid's blacksmithing skill was considered an active skill like ordinary blacksmiths, then it would be possible to show the merit of Divinity by completing one item the moment the 'production' button was pressed.

However, Grid's blacksmithing skill was passive. He didn't have a production button. Furthermore, Pagma's Swordsmanship was classified as a sword skill and it wasn't affected by Divinity. This meant that the benefits Grid gained from Divinity weren't very large.

Grid's anger had skyrocketed for the first few hours.

"Item Combination."

On the day that he got Divinity, Grid had controlled his mind and recalled all the skills related to blacksmithing which he had obtained from hidden pieces.

They were Item Combination and Transformation. The skills exerted a transcendent power depending on the use. However, the cooldown time was too long for Item Transformation, and the casting and cooldown times of Item Combination were long as well. It was difficult to use them in practice.

However, Divinity could now get rid of these shortcomings. It was a skill that removed casting and cooldown time. Grid was confident that his upgraded power was at a level close to 'invincible.'

[Belial's Staff and the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires will be combined!]

Grid usually merged items of the same type. Typically, it was a sword and a sword. Why? That was because he found it difficult to manually devise what types of items should be combined. However, it was now possible for him to depend on the Divinity system. If he used Item Combination after Divinity, the system would assemble the items with care.

That's why he was able to challenge it. He combined a sword and a staff, which were completely different types of items.

Flash!

Belial's Staff and the Enlightenment Sword flew into the sky by themselves and merged together, accompanied by a bright and splendid light which captured everyone's eyes. However, the lightning gods rushing toward Grid showed no response to that. After all, they were weapons with no emotions. They only wanted to get rid of Grid. Then...

[Item Combination has been completed!]

The staff and the sword joined together within the light and

returned back to Grid's hand. Appearance-wise, there was no major issue. The staff had become a handle with a length of two meters. The total length of the combined weapon was three meters.

[Belial's Staff + Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires]

[Rating: Myth (Transcendent)]

Durability: Infinite

Physical Attack Power: 3,490 Magic Attack Power: 2,253

- * 30% increase in intelligence.
- * 20% increase in physical attack power.
- * 40% increase in magic attack power.
- * 30% bonus fire attribute damage.
- * 30% bonus dark attribute damage.
- * 15% bonus lightning attribute damage.
- * Deals an additional 50% damage to sacred beings.
- * There is a certain probability of flames (large) being released when attacking.
- * There is a low probability of illusions being released when attacking.
- * There is a low probability of summoning a red lightning bolt when attacking.
- ★ There is a certain probability of a black flames explosion when attacking.
- * 30% increase in magic casting speed.
- * You can cast three types of magic at the same time. However, proficiency is required.

When fire and dark magic are cast simultaneously, the magic

power of each one was increased by 200%.

* Every time a spell is cast, a shield that absorbs 5,000 damage is automatically created. Targets that strike the shield are subjected to the fear and slowed stats.

★ When triggered, the options such as fire emission, hallucinations, red lightning summoning, black flames explosion, and so on are considered as casting a spell.

* 20% increase in magic critical chance.

* 150% increase in magic critical damage.

* The skill 'Enlightenment' is generated.

* The skill 'Ecstasy of Desire' is generated.

* The skill 'Belial's Power' is created.

“...??”

The attack power and magic damage were slightly lower than those of the individual weapons. It seemed there was a negative aspect because the sword and staff had lost the ideal balance. There was also no significant change in the option values.

There was only one change.

[* Every time a spell is cast, a shield that absorbs 5,000 damage is automatically created. Targets that strike the shield are subjected to the fear and slowed stats.

★ When triggered, the options such as fire emission, hallucinations, red lightning summoning, black flames explosion, and so on are considered as casting a spell.]

The newly added option made the Belial's Staff + Enlightenment Sword reach a new level of fraudulence. It was more than Grid had expected. The power of myth + myth combined...

[The blacksmith god is very surprised. He feels jealous of a human's skills.]

[The other gods are laughing at the blacksmith god.]

[Affinity with the blacksmith god has decreased by 1.]

[If affinity with the blacksmith god reaches -10, any items made (above legendary rating) will be cursed.]

“Ah, ****...” Grid cursed after a long time. Every time he got something new, he always felt both joy and loss. There were big profits but also a big worry. One example was when he was nerfed every time he created five legendary items.

‘Jealousy? Curse? What type of god is this?’

It was a really serious situation that when he combined two myth rated items, his affinity with the blacksmith god would reduce. If Grid didn’t know how to increase the affinity, he would only get a penalty and wouldn’t be able to avoid the curse.

“Wow, this sucks! Really annoying.”

‘Damn bastard!’

The lightning gods came closer as Grid was cursing the unknown blacksmith god. However, Grid’s response was simple. He drew a full moon with the weapon he held, hitting the five lightning gods simultaneously. One was struck by flames while another was struck by a red lightning bolt. Then Grid’s body was surrounded by a translucent dark shield.

[A shield with 5,000 health has been created due to the effect of Belial’s Shield.]

[A shield with 5,000 health has been created due to the effect of Belial’s Shield.]

They were overlapping shields! In the blink of an eye, Grid obtained an extra 10,000 health. The other three lightning gods, that were not exposed to the flames and electricity, counterattacked.

[You have suffered 3,900 damage.]

[The target you have attacked has resisted the ‘fear’ state and failed to resist the ‘slowed’ state.]

[You have suffered 3,710 damage.]

[The target you have attacked has resisted the ‘fear’ state and failed to resist the ‘slowed’...]

[You have suffered 4,050 damage.]

[The target you have attacked has resisted the ‘fear’ state...]

Grid looked at the lightning gods losing their unique speed and was thrilled.

‘A scam!’

The opponent being unaffected by the status conditions was a secondary problem. Grid just enjoyed the overlapping shield effect which didn’t consume any mana.

‘More in the future...!’

Grid’s motivation boiled up. He attacked the lightning gods with the ‘spear’ which combined physical attack power and magic attack power.

‘I want to make more items in the future!’

This desire lay in Grid’s heart. Grid thought about the combination of items he could actively utilize due to Divinity, and his anticipation for the infinite overgeared state he could show pierced the sky. The five lightning gods exchanged blows with Grid and gradually turned to rags, suffering damage from the magic attack power that Grid displayed.

On the other hand, Grid was fine. The fire emission, red lightning, and black flames—the options attached to the item frequently appeared, and the shields accumulated in number. As the battle progressed, he didn’t lose any health and increased his protection instead. It went up to at least 50,000.

“Hat..! Kuhahahahaha!” A feeling of pleasure exploded within

Grid.

It felt like he was cheating while playing the game. This was the joy of being overgeared. He was so excited that he felt like he would burst into pieces. If the lightning gods were creatures with emotions, they would complain about Grid's absurdity.

"Nyahahat!" Noe also had a smile on his face while he was binge eating. Every time he swallowed a piece of the thunder stone which was the core of the lightning god, Noe's level rose quickly, and it was now close to 100. This wasn't strange since Noe was eating five lightning gods.

Grid shattered the head of the last lightning god. The duration of Item Combination finished, and he recovered the two separate weapons. Then he looked up at the glass ceiling.

"The thunder stone..."

It was emitting massive thunderbolts. Grid stabbed it with his sword. Then...

Kuwuong.

The clouds covering the sky disappeared like they had been a lie, and the thunder and lightning stopped. The heavy rain subsided as well. Light returned to the world that had faded to grey.

"...!!" Goldhit opened her eyes.

She hurriedly raised her body and looked around, wondering if she had dreamed everything. Then Goldhit saw the scene of Gyuratan and Bain competing against each other. It wasn't a dream.

'Dammit!'

To think she had shown such an ugly appearance to the emperor...? It was a disgrace. Goldhit was stunned because she had been so confident at first. Now, her face was flushed red. She was

confused. Why hadn't she used Teleport to get to the palace? It had been to analyze the power and techniques of the great demon.

Goldhit had inferred that Astaroth was familiar with darkness and lightning magic. There was also the high possibility that swordsmanship was involved. Therefore, Goldhit had used magic to significantly increase her body's defense and physical strength.

Had that been all? After her splendid appearance, she had immediately deployed a barrier in case the great demon counterattacked. As a person who explored eternal life, Goldhit's desire for survival was really great. Yet she had allowed an attack to hit her almost as soon as she arrived.

Goldhit clutched her head and recalled her last memory. 'I didn't get hit by him.'

Yes, the great magic that hit her body hadn't been from Gyuratan. She winced as she remembered his appearance.

'There is another enemy somewhere here.'

Goldhit was finally convinced that she had been hit in the back.

'The enemy's level is significant.'

They had the ability to use magic capable of penetrating a shield made of all attributes and the ability to hide so that she couldn't detect it. Maybe it was another great demon... Could another great demon be hiding somewhere here? Goldhit gulped nervously.

A lightning bolt fell from the sky.

"Uh...?" A chill ran down Goldhit's spine. She realized once again how clever the enemy was. The lightning storm itself was magic... The source couldn't be found because this was magic without attributes.

"Is this Astaroth's field...?!"

It was an enormous monster. Maybe Astaroth was a single digit great demon when he was complete?

It was at this time that Bain's sword was unable to pierce through the demonic energy and floated in the sky. Bain missed the sword flying away from his head and was unable to block Gyuratan's next attack.

“...”

At the collapsed great hall, the First Knight was in rags, and the Five Pillars present had been defeated. The corpses of the soldiers and knights that formed a mountain in the background were meaningless. This was the overwhelming power of the great demon.

Astaroth was about to speak. There was no hope for humanity. At that moment...

Swaaaah!

The rain pouring from the ceiling suddenly stopped. The lightning storm subsided, and the demonic energy around Gyuratan's body became a haze.

‘Don't tell me...?’

The frustrated Goldhit remembered a certain man—Overgeared King Grid. Then...

Clink.

Mercedes used a broken sword as a cane and raised her body. It was a dangerous situation. Mercedes was severely wounded and seemed like she would die at any moment. It seemed like it was hard for her just to breathe. So, why? Why did the emperor feel infinite trust in her? This was the value of a knight's existence.

Chapter 806

A great demon was an existence beyond eternity. From their point of view, 15 years was extremely short. It was a long time for Astaroth, however, despite him being a great demon. The newly acquired body that he obtained 15 years ago from his contract was extremely fragile. It was like walking a thorny road as he mixed among humans. He felt relief whenever he passed the day safely.

"So...I persisted for 15 years."

The shackle that was called a contract would last until his summoner's wish was fulfilled. He overcame Piaro and Asmophel, the ones who decorated the golden age of the empire, before securing his own power. He devoted himself to making sure the days passed without blood or vomiting. However.

"This woman...!"

Kwaduduk!

Astaroth's eyes were consumed with hatred as he gazed at Mercedes.

"You ruined everything!"

In fact, the direct cause was the Overgeared King. If that crazy human hadn't showed up, Astaroth would have succeeded in getting rid of Mercedes and establishing a more solid position. With the way things were going, the contractor's wish to become the emperor would've been quickly realized. As such, the completion of the contract would then secure him enough magic power to look for a chance of resurrection.

Yes, Astaroth hated and resented the Overgeared King for ruining his years of waiting. He wanted to tear out Grid's soul and chew on the body. But the Overgeared King wasn't here at the moment, making it natural for Astaroth's resentment to spill onto Mercedes.

“Why...?! Why did you bring him in?”

Astaroth's weak body couldn't bear his wrath as the swollen blood vessels on his forehead were ripped apart, spewing blood everywhere. Astaroth didn't care, however, as he barely managed to gather his weakened demonic energy and fire it at Mercedes.

Astaroth knew one fact from mixing in with humans for the past 15 years: they were really weak. They were creatures that were little different from the livestock that they raised. It wouldn't be strange for the injured Mercedes in front of him to die immediately. She would disappear from even a small wave of mana. There was a limit that humans couldn't overcome.

The lightning demonic energy reached Mercedes; resistance was not allowed. The metal attraction attribute of the lightning pulled Mercedes's broken sword towards her, preventing any resistance. She was destined to be helplessly killed by her own weapon, Astaroth was sure of it.

On the other hand, the emperor believed in Mercedes. The emperor shouted, “Mercedes! Survive!”

In the 12 years that she had been serving her master, this would be the first time that Mercedes had received her master's sincere command.

“...”

Her faint consciousness. Her numb flesh. Mercedes's vision was blurry, as if she was trapped in a cloudy fog. The only thing keeping her standing was her instinct to protect the emperor. However, things changed the moment she received the emperor's command.

Mercedes's vision brightened, her sharp eyes processing the world more completely than before. Mercedes threw her sword, stopping the demonic energy that was flowing towards her.

“It's useless!”

Astaroth had come flying after the demonic energy. Astaroth ridiculed Mercedes for using the lightning rod principle to neutralize his demonic energy. It was just a desperate, last-ditch effort after all. His devastating sword flew towards Mercedes' face.

Mercedes used a sword technique, shouting, "Supreme Swordsmanship 4th Style!"

Her body responded with the technique that had been ingrained in her body since childhood. The skill of an old hero, the technique that exuded the essence of a person labeled a traitor. While it had to be sealed, Mercedes used it at this moment.

"What?"

Astaroth's eyes narrowed in surprise. He was baffled that the sword about to pierce Mercedes's face suddenly lost momentum before being pulled towards Mercedes' fingertips. Mercedes created a sword by substituting her hands and arms in its place. Her body shone radiantly as her palms held Astaroth's sword.

World messages emerged.

[A legendary knight has been born!]

[Every knight in the world will look up to her and praise her!]

"What...?" What...! What?!!!'

The fear sealed deep inside Astaroth's heart instantly surged up. He got a glimpse of Muller's shadow, a legend that broke beyond human limits and could threaten a superior species, from Mercedes. Mercedes had evolved. Astaroth wanted to deny the terrible reality before him.

"Knight's Resolution."

Silver sword energy burst out from Mercedes. Her sword energy didn't target Astaroth and headed towards her fellow knights instead.

"Oh...! Ohhh...!"

“S-Sir Mercedes!”

The knights who received Mercedes’ sword energy rose up. They were so energetic it was hard to imagine that they had been on the verge of dying not too long ago. A silver sword imprint on their chests burned like fire. There was also a silver sword imprint on Mercedes’ own chest.

“What are you trying to do?!!” shouted Astaroth, feeling threatened. He let out a deep, guttural growl, as if he were a wild beast. However, Mercedes and the knights felt no fear, with infinite courage protecting them.

“For our homeland.”

“For our homeland!!”

Mercedes and the knights yelled! Then they rushed to Astaroth all at once. Astaroth was forced to give up the sword caught by Mercedes in order to get away from his spot, which was a big deal considering his strength. Thanks to Astaroth, Mercedes got a new weapon and became a complete knight.

Despite her various injuries, she leapt towards Astaroth at a transcendent pace, her sword dancing through the air like it was nothing. Her beautiful swordsmanship captivated everyone’s attention.

“Pledge Sword.”

The knights couldn’t count how many times Mercedes stabbed Astaroth with her silver sword energy; it was just too fast to be seen by the naked eye. She stabbed so much and so fast that it made the illusion that the universe was pouring out into the air.

“Kuak!”

Astaroth crashed to the ground and coughed up blood.

Kuwaaaang!

The floor collapsed. The ground vibrated but the knights stood

firmly in place. Due to Mercedes' buff effect, their courage and physical abilities had increased significantly.

"You...!" Astaroth's pale face became paler as he barely raised his body. Dozens of swords could be seen in his vision. It was in the sky above him. Mercedes watched Astaroth being damaged by the buffed knights and held her sword in front of her chest. The straight line seemed to represent her heart.

"Didn't I tell you? I will punish you."

Mercedes's sword energy fully unfurled, revealing wings of silver light fluttering behind her. Her glowing sword gave Astaroth a sense of despair.

"Why?!"

Why were the legends always disturbing him?! This call rang out as Mercedes's sword came down like an angel descending to earth. Astaroth lost his power in the aftermath of the thunder stone's destruction, and was unable to cope with her attack. Thus, he was split in half, turning to grey.

"Waaaaaaaah!"

The knights' shouts filled the great hall. Their momentum seemed to cover all of Titan. On the other hand, everyone, including the emperor, Bain, and Goldhit were silent. The second legend in the empire's history. Bain and Goldhit couldn't help feeling jealous.

In addition, there was the emperor.

"..."

He was ashamed. From the moment he was born, he had reigned over the world. This was the first time he was unable to raise his head. Mercedes approached him. Her life was saved after becoming a legend, but her body was covered in bloody wounds. Even so, just the fact that she was still beautiful was amazing.

"Your Majesty, please forgive my disloyalty in not trusting you."

"..."

The emperor was silent as Mercedes knelt down before him. She was dominated by guilt, making the emperor feel even more pained.

"That...you are putting the burden of blame on yourself?"

"Knights can't blame their masters."

"Piaro and the former Red Knights didn't betray me?"

"Yes. Everything was the work of the evil great demon."

"Did you know it from the beginning?"

"I only found out recently. Piaro and Asmophel are serving the Overgeared King."

Mercedes' explanation followed, explaining the truth that she had heard and seen to the emperor. The emperor listened quietly while the knights were in tears.

"I see... It was like that..." The emperor nodded after he found out the truth. He lamented while feeling regret and guilt over the past. He was grateful that Piaro met a new master and overcame the past feelings.

"Mercedes."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

What decision would the empire make? Would he forgive Piaro's sins, and redeem him as a hero? Or would he cover up the past mistakes? No matter what choice the emperor made, Mercedes had to accept it. Honestly, though, she hoped that the emperor would tell the truth to the empire. She dreamed that Piaro would be stripped of the 'traitor' label.

The emperor's voice entered her ears, "I will strip you of your knight qualifications."

"...!"

"Y-Your Majesty!"

Mercedes was at a loss for words while the knights were agitated. Bain and Goldhit were also greatly confused. The emperor was getting rid of a knight who had become a legend? It didn't matter what the reason was; it was an incredibly stupid choice.

Bain was absolutely obedient to the emperor's commands, and had never dared give his opinion before, making what he was doing now all the more incredulous. He stood in front of the emperor, admonishing. "Your Majesty, you should reconsider..."

It was useless, as the emperor didn't give in. He shook his head and approached Mercedes, who was shocked to the core. He touched Mercedes' delicate, wounded hands.

"This isn't a command, but a request. Mercedes, give me a chance for atonement. Please serve my old friend and help him spend his last years in peace."

Piario, who was regarded as the best genius of the empire since childhood, also came from an excellent lineage. It was natural for him to be approached by the emperor when he was still a prince. The two of them were friends for a long time and accumulated a friendship beyond status. This was why the emperor's sense of betrayal towards Piario was so large, and also why he hated the existence of the Red Knights. Piario's betrayal was a great ordeal and pain for the emperor.

"Please, I'm asking you."

"..."

The emperor shed tears. It was the first time Mercedes and the knights had seen it. They realized that the emperor was also human. Mercedes was unable to refuse his request. In the end, "...I will leave. I will protect the old hero and pass on his happiness to Your Majesty in the future."

"Thank you... I really thank you." Then. "I'm sorry."

Did the emperor ever meet anyone with a pure heart since the time he lost Empress Aria, and the time he was betrayed by a friend? Sadly, he hadn't. But things would change in the future. The weeping emperor smiled as the great burden in his heart was relieved.

The Saharan Empire was destined to become stronger in the future.

At the same time...

[A legendary knight has been born!]

[You have succeeded in sealing the weakened great demon Astaroth!]

[The 1st place raid compensation is acquired!]

"...No, what is this?"

Grid's mind became blank.

Chapter 807

[Name: Kazak

Age: 6 years old Gender: Male

Race: Human

Level: 1

Strength: 1/40 Stamina: 2/50

Agility: 1/30 Intelligence: 1/???

-A child with innately high magic power. Four years ago, he was kidnapped by the magic tower and raised by magicians.

He lacks language and intellectual abilities because he didn't receive any education.]

[Name: Cha Cha

Age: 5 years old Gender: Female

Race: Human

Level: 1

Strength: 1/20 Stamina: 1/40

Agility: 1/40 Intelligence: 1/???

-A child with innately high magic power. Four years ago, she was kidnapped by the magic tower and raised by magicians.

She lacks language and intellectual abilities because she didn't receive any education.]

Shortly after destroying the thunder stone, Grid immediately descended to the 79th floor. In fact, he wanted to rush to the imperial palace right now. However, he couldn't pass by the children who were being treated as livestock.

"Abu? Ah!" Dozens of boys and girls extended their hands as they found Grid. The sounds from the children's stomachs indicated

they were hungry.

‘Dammit.’ Grid found it hard to understand. Goldhit had selected children to be the ‘vessel’ of her soul. If she was going to use their bodies, then it was normal to take care of them. Yet why were the children treated as cattle?

‘It’s also annoying to look after too many of them.’

He could imagine all types of things. It was horrible and disgusting. Tsk, Grid narrowed his eyes only to suddenly control his expression. It was because the children became scared when they saw his tough face.

“It’s okay. I’m not a bad person.”

Since when had he been so kind? It was strange for him to save people who weren’t related to himself. Grid smiled bitterly and smashed the lock containing the children. The small padlock was too thin to cope with Grid’s strength that was over 3,000.

“Come out.” Grid opened the door as gently as possible. However, none of the children attempted to come out. For the children, this was the only world they knew.

‘...Shit.’ Grid’s emotions intensified. His blood boiled just thinking about Goldhit’s face, or rather, the face of the child that she took over.

“Sigh.” Grid reigned in his heart and entered the 79th floor. He fell to his knees without worrying about the dirt between the haystacks. “Come outside with me. If you go outside, there will be many delicious and pretty things. You can feel the clean air when you breathe.”

“...”

The intentions in his heart were delivered. Grid’s smile combined with his high charm and dignity stat gave the children confidence.

“Abu...” The first one to bravely move was a small boy. He took a cautious step outside. It was a signal.

“Ahh! Ah!” All the other boys and girls started running out.

“Please stay quiet.”

Then it happened when Grid was handing out the underwear he'd made to the children.

“What are you doing?!” Magicians emerged. They had come rushing when they heard the sound of the thunder stone exploding. The frightened children hid behind Grid's back. Grid asked, “What are these children?”

“Haven't you met Goldhit already? Can't you guess the identity of the children based on her appearance? Then...”

“Just answer. Why did you abuse the children like this?”

“Neglect isn't abuse. Of course, we looked after them well at first. Now they are just waste children who lost the qualification to be a ‘vessel.’”

“...Waste? Wouldn't it be better to let them go instead of treating them like this?”

Grid had experienced countless incidents while playing Satisfy. He had suffered a lot in the past and learned not to lose his cool. However, this time was an exception. The victims were so young. Grid's voice was shaking, but the magicians didn't care much. They were also angry. Grid had become an enemy the moment he destroyed the thunder stone.

“It's a waste to release them, don't you know? They can be used as experiments someday. They're guinea pigs.”

The words were a taunt filled with ridicule. In the end...

“You trash!” Grid couldn't endure his anger. He threw his body toward the magicians, who acted like they had been waiting.

“Water Wave!”

“Chain Lightning!”

Overgeared King Grid—he was the Hero King born hundreds of years after Muller. Yes, hundreds of years... The years were too long for people to accurately gauge the value of the Hero King. The magicians acknowledged Grid but mistook him for someone they could go against. This was a misjudgment that would lead to a terrible tragedy.

“What...?” The magicians were shocked as Grid was unharmed despite their collaboration magic. Grid also ignored the binding magic and grease magic on the floor.

“Tch! Explosion!” One of the magicians used a powerful explosive spell. He was the first to realize he could be killed if he fought while worrying about the tower collapsing. However, this enlightenment was too late. Grid used Valhalla’s magic resistance to minimize the magic damage and Doran’s Ring to regain health. Then he also succeeded in completing his sword technique.

“Revolve.”

“...!!”

Peeeeeeong!

The explosion, which should’ve hit Grid, swallowed up the magician instead. Someone was seriously injured, while someone else’s casting was canceled. However, the group of magicians could draw out an ultimate efficiency by casting different spells sequentially.

Grid had various combat experiences and couldn’t be unaware of this fact. The reason he had chosen a counterattack as his first skill was to cut off the magicians’ flow, and it had a big effect. The magicians’ formation broke down, but Grid didn’t use any skills on them.

He judged he would get more out of the basic attacks instead of just one skill. It was a judgment based on the inherent limitations

of a magician with low defense and health. The magicians weren't able to endure the basic attacks Grid dealt them with the assistance of Alex's Quick Gloves. It was safe to say that the battle ended at this point. Of course...

“Crossfire!”

“Thunder Hammer!”

There still existed excellent people in a group. Some of the magicians, who were Goldhit's disciples, showed excellent combat power in a melee. They used relatively weak spells with a quick casting time in order to accumulate damage on Grid. The problem was that a single hit from Grid dealt more damage than three of the magicians' spells. Resistance was futile.

“Kuk...! Cough!”

“You...! You are really crazy!”

The fallen magicians threw threats at Grid.

“Do you think you will be safe if you harm us?”

“How dare you insult subjects of the empire?! Can you afford the empire's wrath? You and your country will soon disappear into history!”

The tower magicians were estimated to have a minimum level of 360 or higher. Despite the limitations of humanoid NPCs and magicians, it wasn't easy for them to die from Grid's attacks. That's why they could talk like this. Grid looked at them and didn't let go of his sword. ‘It's a good idea to take care of all of them.’

It wasn't just because of his anger but also for the future of the Overgeared Kingdom. The empire was eventually destined to become the main enemy of the Overgeared Kingdom, which meant the magicians were expected to be a major threat. Now that Grid had destroyed the thunder stone to get rid of the great demon, it was an opportunity for him to get rid of the magicians. That's

right. Grid was someone who usually didn't fall for provocations easily. So, the reason why he responded to the magicians' provocations was actually due to his calculations.

"It's a mountain I have to cross. I'm afraid it can't be avoided."

"You...!"

Grid's reply sank the magicians into despair. Then Grid glanced at Noe, who yawned and approached the boys and girls. "You human kids! You can appreciate the noble appearance of hell's best demonic beast! Nyang!"

"Abu! Abuoo!" The children had never seen something cuter and more beautiful. After confirming that the children were looking at Noe, Grid cleaned up the magicians.

"Let's go."

'I have to help Mercedes,' Grid judged as he left the tower with the magicians in it. 'The fact that I visited the empire today will be known by Goldhit.'

It was inevitable that he would be identified as one of the suspects behind the chandelier falling and walls collapsing. However, Grid wasn't greatly concerned. Wouldn't it be considered the work of the great demon?

'Astaroth was revealed at a good time, so things are going well.'

Grid decided to rescue Mercedes from danger without realizing that he was the reason for Astaroth's emergence.

"All of you wait here." Grid moved the children to a place that looked safe and handed out food to be shared. Noe's mouth was in a '人' shape as he flew around Grid. It was difficult to see Noe as a 'demonic beast.'

'If these children were raised in a good environment, they would be happy right now...'

Greater compassion and gentleness filled Grid's eyes as he looked at the children.

[A legendary knight has been born!]

[Every knight in the world will look up to her and praise her!]

“What?”

The world message about the birth of a new legend appeared before Grid. Grid noted that the legendary knight was a ‘her.’

‘Don’t tell me it is Mercedes?’ Grid was naturally reminded of Mercedes.

[You have succeeded in sealing the weakened great demon, Astaroth!]

[1st place raid compensation is acquired!]

He was stunned. “...No, what is this?”

It wasn't unusual for the empire to be able to raid the great demon. That was natural when considering the power of the empire. However...

‘Why do I have the first place contribution?’

He got the first place contribution despite not participating in the raid?

‘Something like this... Ah!’ The confused Grid realized it. ‘Is it because raiding Astaroth was impossible until I destroyed the thunder stone? Is that why I have first place in the contribution?’

He was only half right. Revealing Astaroth's identity was considered by the system to be part of Grid's contribution. However, it was impossible for Grid to notice this fact.

‘In any case, this is serious.’

It was a surprise! Grid didn't have much of an expectation, but he was worried. His developing thinking ability sent him a warning.

‘Mercedes is a legendary knight.’

A legend...

She had made a great contribution in raiding Astaroth and was now the empire's hero. Could she still join the Overgeared Kingdom? It was impossible. The empire wouldn't let her go, and her nature meant it was impossible for her to leave the empire.

"Dammit..."

Grid depended on items more than anyone, considered items as more important than anyone, and thus became the Overgeared King. However, he knew the importance of personnel. He had a large number of named NPCs such as Piaro, Asmophel, Sticks, and Rabbit. Grid felt more regretful about losing Mercedes than joyous over the various raid rewards now entering his inventory.

"Return to the kingdom first... Eh?"

Grid was moving the children when he stopped. The last raid reward captured his gaze.

[‘Weakened Great Demon Astaroth’s Power’ has been attached to the Rune of Darkness!]

"..."

It was an incoming reward. However, he didn't know what Astaroth's power was. Grid hadn't fought with Astaroth personally, so he didn't know Astaroth's skills and abilities. It was hard to predict what power would be attached to the rune without information about Astaroth.

The excited Grid immediately confirmed Astaroth's power.

[Weakened Great Demon Astaroth's Power]

[If you are a demonkin or have demonic energy, you can create the ‘Storm Demonic Energy Field.’]

"...Field?" Grid's mouth dropped open. Create a field...? This was completely...

"Am I a boss mob?"

Grid was becoming more omnipotent rather than versatile.

Chapter 808

Mercedes left the great hall after receiving the emperor's command.

"Your Majesty! Are you okay?" The other Five Pillars, apart from Bain and Goldhit who were guarding the emperor and the indisposed Kyle, came running belatedly.

They were Grandmaster Zikfrector and Armored Cavalryman Chensler. Zikfrector looked at the traces of the battle, while Chensler examined the emperor's body. "Are you hurt?"

"I'm fine," the emperor gave a brief answer, but he didn't rebuke Zikfrector and Chensler for not coming sooner. In the first place, they had been outside the imperial palace. This was actually a fast arrival time.

"You must've destroyed the thunder stone," Zikfrector opened his mouth as he realized Astaroth's death. "It looks like an overwhelming battle... The fact that you can overcome the situation meant there was an extra variable?"

Goldhit nodded. "That's right. I was able to overcome the crisis by ordering my disciples to destroy the thunder stone."

Clearly, Goldhit didn't intend to announce that it was Grid who destroyed the thunder stone. She had already lost the thunder stone, so she planned to gain benefits from it. After all, she hadn't done anything during the Astaroth raid. However, Zikfrector was cynical. "You gave up the thunder stone? That's a funny joke."

Zikfrector knew Goldhit's desires, so he was convinced that Goldhit would never destroy the thunder stone herself. Goldhit's face reddened. "Do you doubt my words?"

"Don't get too agitated." Zikfrector didn't pay anymore attention to Goldhit. After all, he was the pinnacle of the Five Pillars. From his point of view, the magician king was trivial compared to the

new legend.

“Your Majesty.” Zikfrector stood before the emperor and saw through everything, making it hard to believe that he had just arrived at the scene. “Was Mercedes the one who dealt the final blow to Astaroth?”

“Correct.”

“If she isn’t here, does this mean that Your Majesty sent her away for some reason?”

“...Grandmaster has seen it correctly.”

“I won’t ask anymore. There’s just one thing,” Zikfrector even dared to speak in such a casual manner to the emperor. It was estimated that he had lived longer than Goldhit despite having the appearance of a young man. Zikfrector told the emperor, “You might respect her work, but don’t give her any spoils of the battle. You need it.”

“...”

“If you’re embarrassed, I will go and get it from her.”

“No, I will give the order.” The emperor listened to Zikfrector, wrote a short order, and delivered it to a soldier.

“I will forever keep the loyalty I have learned from you.”

There were dozens of knights gathered at Mercedes’ mansion. They were in the garden saying farewell to Mercedes. On the other hand, Mercedes was indifferent. “Why are you gathering to send me off when the palace is in disarray from all types of disasters? Even now, people are in misery.”

“...It’s the last time. Please let us say a final farewell.”

“We will return to the front lines as soon as we confirm your departure.”

“You aren’t kids,” Mercedes scolded them even at the end. However, a smile was spreading across her face. She was secretly happy about being able to share a final farewell with the colleagues she had been with for 12 years.

Step.

“Attention!”

“I respect and love you.”

Step.

“Blessings for you and the heroes of the past.”

One step, another step...

As Mercedes moved through the garden toward the gate, the speed of her footsteps was slower than usual. There were tears in the eyes of the knights as they saw her off with their swords.

‘Sir Dia, Sir Lorex, and the other knights who passed on... Are you watching us from heaven?’

The Red Knights had the highest regards for Mercedes, the noble knight. There were many people who wanted to leave with her. However, their master was the emperor. They had learned from Mercedes that knights must be loyal to their master until the end.

It was a solemn atmosphere. In the garden, Mercedes faced a young soldier.

“This is an imperial command,” the soldier said. Then he read out the imperial letter, “Mercedes, I wish you luck.”

“Is that the end?”

“Yes, that’s right. Dear Captain Mercedes, I also wish you good luck.” The eyes of the young soldier were shining like a star as they stared at Mercedes.

“Thank you, Mr. Soldier. I wish you luck,” Mercedes responded with a smile that was more beautiful than the stars.

[Storm Demonic Energy Field-Weakened State (3)]

[-Summons a lightning storm with a radius of 200 meters.

-Field Effect 1—

A minimum of 4 to a maximum of 11 lightning strikes will occur per second. The struck target will suffer 10,000 fixed damage, resulting in paralysis, stuns, burns, and other status conditions.

* Lightning bolts will fall randomly. In addition, the lightning bolt won't distinguish between enemies and friends. It will be a threat to all except for the caster.

-Field Effect 2—

Strong winds will lighten the user's body. Under the effect of the strong winds, the user's movement speed will increase by 20%. On the other hand, everyone apart from the user will be unable to cope with the pressure of the strong wind and movement speed will drop by 20%.

-Field Effect 3—

The heavy winds will interrupt the visibility of all targets except the user, reducing the accuracy rate by 10%.

-Field Effect 4—

The sound of thunder in the ears will cause confusion. The skill and casting speed of everyone except the user is reduced by 10%.

-Field Effect 5—

Sealed due to the weakening. Will be opened in Weakened State (2).

-Field Effect 6—

Sealed due to the weakening. Will be opened in Weakened State (1).

-Field Effect 7—

Sealed due to the weakening. Will be opened when released from a weakened state.

Resources consumed when field is activated: 1,000 mana per second.

The time it takes to summon the field: 30 seconds.

* Activated immediately in places where the weather is already cloudy.

Skill Cooldown Time: 20 minutes.]

“...”

Field magic was one of the symbols of a boss monster. The field that the boss summoned created enormous pressure by strengthening the boss, weakening the players, or exerting aggression. This powerful force was now obtained by one player—Grid. It was more appropriate to say it was crazy than to say it was great. This was almost a collapse of the balance!

‘However, the mana consumption is very large.’

It was a magic that exerted all types of influence over a 200-meter radius. He couldn’t think of it as a waste of mana. Grid thought that if he used this field magic in conjunction with Blackening, it would be like giving himself wings. This was despite its weakened state.

‘What are the other sealed effects?’

It almost made up for missing the rare talent called Mercedes. This was the excitement of a game. Unlike reality where trying hard gave a reasonable reward, the world of games gave huge rewards as a player moved through new episodes, raised their level, and overcame trials. Who wouldn’t love games?

Grid smiled as he comforted his past self, ‘Shin Youngwoo, the game isn’t a refuge for you. It’s hope.’

Thanks to the power he gained today, many things could be

achieved in the future. Grid formed a fist and called out to Noe, “Let’s really go back now.”

It was good. He had accomplished his purpose and got more than he had expected. This was enough to appease the regret of having to give up Mercedes. Grid led the children along with Noe. If Grid were alone, he would be able to fly to Reinhardt in one month. However, it was impossible with dozens of young children. Their movement speed was as slow as a turtle’s.

‘What should I do with these children?’

Should he leave them at a village? But would these children be welcomed? Wouldn’t these innocent children, who were victims without knowing the reason, suffer new pains? Grid was more concerned for the children than for how long it would take to return to the Overgeared Kingdom.

‘It might be better to summon a knight.’

Euphemina could use Mass Teleport and take all the children with her at once. Grid was about to make a decision when he heard Noe’s excited voice in his ears.

“That is a flower, nyong.”

“Abu!”

“That is a mountain, nyong.”

“Ada!”

“That is the sky, nyong.”

“Bubu! Ba!”

“Nyahahat! The best demonic beast of hell Noe is your teacher, nyang!”

“No...e!! No..uh!”

“Nyang!”

The children had been trapped in the magic tower for as long as

they could remember, while Noe had spent a lot of time in the pet inventory. Now the children's faces were full of happiness as they received freedom and saw the picturesque scenery. In the end...

‘Let's walk a bit more.’

Grid didn't want to ruin the atmosphere and summoned Randy and the Overgeared Skeletons instead.

“Abu!”

Clack! Clack clack!

“Adad!”

“Hello. I am Randy.”

Claack! Clack!

Hell's best demonic beast, the strongest doppelganger, two skeletons, little children who didn't know anything, and the 'strongest player'—this unusual party crossed the river and passed through the forest. Anyone who saw them would feel it was absurd. Additionally, the party...

“You! Give me your money! Keok!”

It was incredibly powerful. In the process of walking, Grid destroyed more than 10 groups of bandits and at least 1,000 monsters, giving a good amount of experience to the Overgeared Skeletons. However, a crisis soon arrived for everybody. People who always won were rare in this world.

Kiyaaaaaaah!

“Dammit! Why is the medusa here?”

They encountered a field boss monster as soon as they entered the Lamia Forest. It was a boss with a level in the low 300's—a weak field boss that Grid could hunt alone. The problem was the children. They could die just by having their gazes meet the medusa's eyes. Grid encouraged the medusa to focus on him, but the children didn't cooperate.

“Ahh! Kyao!”

“Kyaak~~!”

The bizarre appearance of the medusa's snake hair was horrifying to the children who didn't know the world. The children screamed, and the medusa's eyes turned straight toward them.

“No...!”

Were these children's lives going to end after only a short life of suffering? Grid felt desperate.

Puk!

A number of arrows flew from the side and successively pierced the medusa's head. It was done with an archery skill reminiscent of Jishuka. Grid's and the medusa's gazes headed in the direction of the arrows. They saw a knight. Armed with old leather armor instead of red armor, she put away the bow and pulled out an axe.

The medusa was hit in the neck with the thrown axe and the knight rushed toward it. Two swords flashed in a fast and powerful manner. The medusa's heart was pierced, and its head was separated from its body. Then the medusa turned to grey.

“You...”

“Wandering knight Mercedes greets the Overgeared King.”

The two people were reunited.

Chapter 809

“What?”

Why was Mercedes here when she should be the hero of the empire? Grid suspected his eyes and doubted his ears. “Wandering knight? You left the empire?”

It was impossible. Even if Mercedes wanted it, the empire wouldn’t have let her go. Wouldn’t the emperor be a fool not to keep a legendary hero? Grid knew this, but he couldn’t help having expectations. In the first place, Mercedes had a serious nature and didn’t know how to joke.

“...Is this real?”

“Yes.”

“Really?”

“Yes, I really left. To be precise, I got kicked out. Can Your Majesty take me?”

“Ha..!” A smile crossed Grid’s face. He didn’t even have time to feel suspicious about Mercedes being ‘kicked out.’ Grid felt so happy that his head was refreshed. Then he acted rashly.

“I’m happy! I’m really happy, Mercedes! Of course, you’re welcome!” Grid hugged Mercedes’ slender body as hard as possible. Mercedes was embarrassed, but Grid didn’t care. He felt like he would miss her and hugged her desperately. “Haha! I’m so happy! I never thought this day would come!”

If there was a game that classified cards from the F class to the SSS class, Mercedes was undoubtedly an SSS card, and this was before she became a legend. At present, Grid didn’t even dare deduce her value. Now that she had come to serve him, he was happy enough to tear up. He imagined Khan smiling at him in the sky.

“...” Mercedes’ face turned extremely red. Grid’s smile was as bright as the sun, his chest was hard, and she felt his hot breath against her ear. Mercedes was grateful to Grid for saving her from a crisis as well as healing the wounds of the old heroes... Yes, Grid stirred Mercedes’ heart. Mercedes clearly realized that she had been longing for Grid.

“I...” Abandoning resistance, she spoke in a trembling voice as she rested her face against Grid’s chest, “Can I stay with you?”

This was Grid’s answer, “Always, always stay with me.”

It was like this. Mercedes’ confession entered his ears, “I have lived for 27 years as a swordsman and a knight.”

“I know.”

“So, I don’t know the role of a woman.”

“Huh? Really? I see.”

“But I will do my best.”

“Yes. Thank you.”

“As Your Majesty’s knight and mis...”

“Mis?”

“Mis...!”

Mistress! Mercedes hadn’t experienced a first love and couldn’t say the unfamiliar word. She couldn’t say ‘as Your Majesty’s knight and mistress.’ The words turned around and around in her head. Grid cocked his head in confusion. “Mis-mis-mis?”

Was it something like true true true? (similar in Korean)

“Well, it’s okay. In any case, I welcome you once again.” Grid was so intoxicated with joy at obtaining Mercedes that he ignored his trivial curiosity. Anyone watching them now would become so frustrated that they would collapse.

[The level of the Overgeared Skeleton (1) has risen!]

[The level of the Overgeared Skeleton (2) has risen!]

Grid had an unexpected harvest as he walked with the children. It was the growth of the Overgeared Skeletons. In the process of moving from Titan to the border, Grid faced all sorts of monsters. There were many low-level monsters suitable for the Overgeared Skeletons.

“Really cute.” With her eyes shining like lanterns, Mercedes looked like a naive girl. She couldn’t keep her eyes off the Overgeared Skeletons. That’s right. She wasn’t calling Noe or the children rescued from the magic tower cute. Instead, Mercedes had a great fascination with the Overgeared Skeletons.

‘Her taste is truly...’ Grid clicked his tongue, but the Overgeared Skeletons had a different look from ordinary skeletons. Their faces and eyes were bigger. So, it was true that they looked cute at first glance. In that case, Mercedes’ taste couldn’t be called strange.

Clack! Clack clack!

Mercedes patted their heads, and the eyes of the Overgeared Skeletons curved like crescent moons. They liked Mercedes too. Mercedes admired them. “This is the first time I’ve seen undead expressing emotions.”

“There aren’t skeletons like these kids in the empire?”

“They can’t be found anywhere on the continent. These children have a sense of empathy that’s almost life-like. They’re very special children.”

“Hrmm.”

It’s true that they were special kids. They could raise their levels, equip items, and even learn skills. It was difficult to see them as simply summoned undead. They were more like pets. However...

‘They are weak.’

Grid looked at the status windows of the level 70 Overgeared Skeletons.

[Overgeared Skeleton (1)]

[Lv. 70

Health: 1,045/1,045 Mana: 3/3

Strength: 127

Stamina: 100

Agility: 127

Intelligence: 1

Remaining Stat Points: 0

Items Worn:

Weapon: Sturdy Long Sword

Secondary Weapon: Silver Thread.

Armor: Dependable Armor

Exclusive Skills: Silver Thread Shooting, Silver Thread Avoidance, Beginner Mining Technique Lv. 6, Beginner Sword Mastery Lv. 2, Beginner Petrification Resistance, Beginner Physical Resistance, Beginner Magic Resistance, Strike, Bite, Skull Headbutt]

[Overgeared Skeleton (2)]

[Lv. 70

Health: 1,045/1,045

Mana: 525/525

Strength: 25

Stamina: 100

Agility: 55

Intelligence: 175

Remaining Stat Points: 0

Items Worn:

Weapon: Sharp Dagger

Secondary Weapon: Good Shield

Armor: Dependable Armor

Exclusive Skills: Silver Thread Avoidance, Beginner Mining Technique Lv. 6, Beginner Mental Focus Lv. 1, Beginner Petrification Resistance, Beginner Magic Resistance, Beginner Instantaneous Acceleration, Strike, Bite, Skull Headbutt.]

The Overgeared Skeletons gained five stat points every time they leveled up. Unlike ordinary undead, they could grow, wear equipment items, and had high learning abilities. However, they had the limitations of a skeleton. The Overgeared Skeletons were so fragile that they would blow away with the wind or when striking the White Phosphorus Tree with an axe.

Grid had invested points into their stamina, but their survival ability was still weak. In particular, they were vulnerable to explosions and didn't demonstrate a visible defense capability. It had gotten to the point where Grid built armor for them to increase their defense.

‘However, they show a high resistance to slashes and stabs...’

To be precise, their evasion rate was high. Stabs or slashes couldn't strike the bones of the Overgeared Skeletons directly, entering crevices or gaps instead. Therefore, attacks would be judged as having missed their targets. Still, this only happened when they were lucky.

While Grid was regretting the weakness of the Overgeared Skeletons, Mercedes said, “The fundamental problem is that these children don't know how to fight.”

She first pointed to Overgeared Skeleton One. “This kid has a

very good strength to agility ratio. Therefore, his movements are agile and his attacks are sharp, but his intelligence is too low. He doesn't know how to correctly take advantage of his physical ability."

"Hasn't he gained Sword Mastery?"

"His intelligence is so low that it is hard to apply the techniques."

"Ah..."

The problem was the one point in intelligence.

'I also need to invest points in intelligence,' Grid realized and was reminded of Jude. 'Is he doing well?'

There were many people with talent in the Overgeared Kingdom. Now that Jude didn't have to defend Winston, Grid could send someone else. He thought that he should bring Jude to his side sooner or later. Then Mercedes' voice entered his ears, "This kid is clever, but his physical abilities are very low. He uses his skills properly, but there isn't a big effect."

This was the evaluation for the Overgeared Skeleton Two. Grid spoke the truth, "In the first place, he's a candidate to become a magician."

However, he hadn't learned any magic. Additionally, Grid wasn't good at making magic battle gear. As such, Overgeared Skeleton Two couldn't exert his true strength at the present time. The moment Grid thought this...

Awooooo! The sound of wolves rang out from the sky. Grid moved his gaze to the sky and saw direwolves flapping large bat wings. They were level 200 monsters. The Overgeared Skeletons wouldn't be able to deal with them. Mercedes moved forward with a sword in both hands, piercing through the gaps in the sharp teeth of the descending direwolves.

This was a fast and clean swordsmanship that Grid wanted to learn. It seemed that the Overgeared Skeletons were the same.

Overgeared Skeleton One watched Mercedes with wide eyes and suddenly tried to hit Overgeared Skeleton Two. Overgeared Skeleton Two was turned upside down and Overgeared Skeleton One stole his dagger. He wanted to use two swords like Mercedes.

“Interesting.” Mercedes’ clear eyes shone like a lake. She held her double swords and nodded at Overgeared Skeleton One. “Okay. I will teach you simple swordsmanship.”

This was the moment that the Overgeared Skeletons gained a great mentor. Mercedes started to teach the Overgeared Skeletons basic movements that could be followed, and the Overgeared Skeletons used this whenever they encountered low-level monsters.

[The level of the Overgeared Skeleton (1) has risen!]

[The level of the Overgeared Skeleton (2) has risen!]

[The Overgeared Skeleton (1) and Overgeared Skeleton (2) have acquired the skill ‘Vaintz Swordsmanship.’]

“Wow...”

The growth rate of the Overgeared Skeletons had become noticeably faster. In particular, the jump in Overgeared Skeleton One's development was huge. Every time his intelligence increased with a level-up, his attack rate and evasion rate increased significantly. The weakness of his low durability wasn't overcome, but the number of times his arms and legs broke had decreased.

“It's rewarding to teach these children.” Mercedes gently patted the skulls of the Overgeared Skeletons. For some reason, Grid felt a desire to have his head patted by her.

However, he regained his spirit and wondered, ‘Wasn't Braham favorable to the Overgeared Skeletons?’

The prideful Braham had advised Grid to raise the Overgeared Skeletons well. That's right. The Overgeared Skeletons were recognized by the legendary knight Mercedes and the legendary

magician Braham. Maybe these guys were more than Grid had expected? Grid's expectations of them now soared into the sky.

Then a few days passed by...

"Have you been raising two families?" Lael greeted Grid when he finally returned to Reinhardt. The other Overgeared members were also shocked. Grid arrived late with a group of children and a woman, causing them to misunderstand.

Someone muttered, "Energetic King..."

'Secretly having two families and so many children!' The forever single Vantner shed tears of blood.

"There are many people to meet," Mercedes spoke while taking off her helmet. The Overgeared members could now see her name and face.

"The First Knight...!" Someone cried out.

It seemed that Mercedes' presence was really big. Grid formally introduced her, "Everyone, say hello. This is the legendary knight that will be with us in the future."

"What...?" The eyes of Lael and the Overgeared members widened.

Chapter 810

The birth of a legendary knight became a global issue. Who was the main character of the new legend and how strong was her power? How would she change the landscape of Satisfy in the future? Various media companies around the world provided in-depth analytical broadcasts, all of which had high ratings. It was proof that there was hot interest in the new legend.

On the other hand, the mood among the Overgeared members was the worst. The Overgeared members internally discussed the matter and found it was highly likely the legendary knight had been born in the empire. The Red Knights were the best on the continent. Among them, the First Knight Mercedes was a female and likely to have become the legend. The Overgeared members were able to easily guess this and felt upset.

Who was Mercedes? She was the person who made Grid kneel to her the first time she met him. It was terrible to think about how the Overgeared members would be suppressed by her now that she was stronger. However, at this moment...

“Everyone, say hello. This is the legendary knight that will be with us in the future.” Grid brought Mercedes as his companion.

“...????”

“...Is this real?”

The Overgeared members shut their mouths. They knew that Grid could easily build up affinity with NPCs, but they didn't realize it would be enough to catch a legend. In particular, wasn't Mercedes a knight of the empire? She was famous for her unwavering loyalty, so how did she end up with Grid? It didn't make sense no matter how they thought about it.

Clap. Clap clap, a sound broke the silence. It was the sound of Vantner hitting his bald head in order to determine if this was a

dream or not. After a moment, Vantner scratched his bald head that was as red as a boiled octopus and muttered, “This isn’t a dream?”

That’s right. It was reality. Everyone couldn’t deny it any longer and gulped. They alternated looking between Grid and Mercedes as they asked for an explanation.

“This is it.”

Where should he start? There were too many parts to explain. The moment that Grid was sorting out his thoughts...

“Your Majesty, the introduction is wrong,” Mercedes opened her mouth and kneeled in front of Grid. “I am your knight before I am a legendary knight.”

She would serve him forever along with the old heroes. Mercedes’ noble appearance under the radiant sun gave everyone a chill. A notification window appeared in front of Grid.

[You have recruited the legendary knight Mercedes. The city she stays in will have the strength of its city walls increased by 50% and the power of its siege weapons increased by 20%. Once there is a siege, her knights and soldiers will have their attack, defense, and health increased by 10%.]

Mercedes’ and Piaro’s past, the emergence of the great demon Astaroth and Mercedes’ crisis, and then Grid’s rescue of Mercedes and the Astaroth raid—all the Overgeared members were briefed on the series of incidents and felt doubts.

“It doesn’t make sense to me?”

“That’s right. Why did the emperor release Mercedes? Why did the emperor release Mercedes, who got a great achievement and was promoted to a legend?”

“It is fishy, fishy.”

“Maybe the emperor sent her as a spy?”

“Ah.”

The atmosphere was boisterous. Grid belatedly realized that he had missed the most important part of the story and opened his mouth again, “Mercedes explained it to me on the way.”

Then Grid once again started a long story. It was about the relationship between the emperor and Piaro. In the end, the atmosphere in the group calmed down.

“The hidden story...”

“The emperor sent Mercedes as atonement for what happened to Piaro.”

“Yes. I guess he wants to get rid of his guilt. He also hopes that Piaro’s last years will be happy.”

“...Even the best power on the continent is a human like us in the end. It is a needless bother.”

After all, the Saharan Empire was bound to be the Overgeared Kingdom’s main enemy. This move dampened the hostility that the Overgeared members felt toward the empire and the emperor. They felt strange emotions once they realized the emperor wasn’t that different from them. There were many people who were impressed by the sentiment of sending Mercedes to the Overgeared Kingdom for atonement.

Grid warned them, “Straighten your spirits. The emperor has finished his atonement by sending Mercedes here. He will become bigger than before after getting rid of the shadows in his heart.”

Grid knew because he had seen the emperor face to face, and the emperor was never satisfied. As an individual, Juander was completely different from how he was as an emperor.

Lauel speculated, “For the time being, the emperor will concentrate on strengthening the inner stability.”

The empire needed control after the chandelier and the great demon incidents had occurred one after another. In the course of the reorganization, there would be a bloody fight between factions. Lauel suggested, “We have to regain power during this gap.”

Grid’s revenge was over for the moment. Now that Immortal had left the imperial palace, Grid had other things to do until their whereabouts were found. A new group of knights had to be created with Mercedes as the captain, and new items produced for the Overgeared members. A few Overgeared members had won medals in the National Competition, allowing them to pursue a rapid power development.

Grid rose from his seat. “Okay. I will start.”

It was time for more labor...

Darkness was in front of Grid, but he didn’t show it. He wanted his colleagues to depend on him.

In front of the great hall, Mercedes greeted Grid after the meeting finished, “Aren’t you tired?”

Grid once again realized the power of appearance. It was because his tired mind and body became lighter upon seeing Mercedes’ beautiful face. He was excited when he thought he could continue being with her. “Aren’t I able to work a bit harder thanks to you?”

“...?” It was adorable seeing her try to figure out the meaning of his words. Grid couldn’t help laughing and looked at Mercedes’ detailed information.

[Name: Mercedes

Age: 27 Gender: Female

Occupation: Legendary Knight

* All types of weapons and armor can be worn without restrictions. However, magic weapons are excluded.

* Can bring out hidden functions when wearing a shield and heavy armor.

* Can create your own knights. The number of times a knight can be created will increase every time the skill level of Complete Weapons Mastery is increased.

Title: Owner of Keen Insight

* Can penetrate the essence of things.

* Disables mental magic and all sorts of traps. Can see through the target's skills and abilities, which will reduce the target's defense and attack power by up to 30%.

Title: One who Became a Legend

.....

Title: Becoming a Role Model

* Increases the growth rate of the knights and soldiers you command by 30% while keeping their loyalty at the maximum.

* When appointed as a commander in a war, the morale of allies won't deteriorate easily. The delivery speed of commands will increase by 50%.

Level: 457

Strength: 3,231 Stamina: 2,588

Agility: 2,910 Intelligence: 1,530

Leadership: 2,512

Exclusive Skills: Empire's Military Tactics (A+), Vaintz' Swordsmanship (S), Eyes that can Read Combat (SS), Noble Bravery (SS), Knight's Resolution (SS), Shield Block (SS), Complete Weapons Mastery (???), Incomplete Predictions (???), Noble Chivalry (???), Silver Wings (???).

-A person with a prestigious lineage of the Saharan Empire and who has a unique insight. As she develops, her insight will grow to

a level that can predict the future.

* Currently, she is loyal to Player Grid. Players aside from Grid can't build up an affinity with her.]

The strongest—was there any other word to describe her? In particular, Grid liked that he was the only player who could build up an affinity with Mercedes in this world. The sense of superiority at being her favorite was beyond imagination.

“Have you looked around the capital?”

“Yes. I think it is a place like heaven.”

“Heaven?”

“It is a city where people who don't know misfortunes are gathered. Even the lowest residents are laughing. Since it is a city where Piaro and Asmophel are located, the walls and military facilities are perfect.”

A rich and secure city—this was what Mercedes felt when she saw Reinhardt. It was the same as when she looked for Grid two months ago in order to convey the imperial order. Mercedes had traveled all over the continent and visited countless cities, but Reinhardt was counted within the top five of good cities.

“I am thankful for the words. Have you met Piaro?”

“No. I searched all the military facilities in the city but couldn't see him anywhere. He seemed to be away.”

“Military facilities? Why are you looking for Piaro there?”

“...?”

“Ah...” Grid was about to say Piaro could be found in the fields, only to stop and sigh deeply. He was saddened by the fact that he now recognized Piaro as a farmer.

‘Originally, he should be in the military facilities...’ This was during Piaro's days as a great swordsman. ‘Of course, he is still strong enough now.’

Piario's Pounding Mortar and Fated to Perish were winning cards that could even damage a great demon. In particular, his destructive power was transcendent when he used Natural State. Piario was still strong and was in a position to be the best. Unfortunately, most of Piario's skills were agriculture-related. If all of his skills were combat-related, Piario would be much more powerful than he was now.

"Your Majesty?"

Grid looked up and realized that Mercedes was making an anxious expression at him. Her transparent eyes, which were filled with a clear light, healed Grid's heavy heart. He smiled and grabbed Mercedes' small hands. "Let's go to Piario."

Mercedes' face flushed red, but Grid didn't notice.

"Why is Piario here?" Mercedes was confused when Grid led her to some agriculture fields. Piario was someone who had accomplished the title of a great swordsman. Why would he be in fields instead of working to obtain the status of a Sword Saint? Shouldn't he be spending 24 hours a day polishing his swordsmanship?

'...Piario probably needs time to rest.'

The full moon that filled the night sky was huge today, and the rice fields were calm and beautiful. Mercedes walked beside Grid while listening to the night sounds. Her heart was beating wildly. She imagined Piario looking up at the night sky with his hands clasped behind his back and pictured the noble and dignified appearance of the old hero resting.

Puk! Puk puk!

"...?" Mercedes moved across the fields with a throbbing heart only to stop in place when she heard the sound of something digging at the ground. On the other hand, Grid didn't stop. He

hadn't heard the digging sound yet. It was a major reminder of the gap between Mercedes and Grid.

"Your Majesty." Mercedes silently pulled out her sword and stopped Grid. "I can hear a suspicious sound. I think people are digging a tunnel to infiltrate the capital."

"Tunnel?"

The thought of North Korean operatives breaking into South Korea came to Grid's mind. He tried to focus, then he started to hear the sound of digging in his ears. Grid was very familiar with this sound. It was the sound of a hand plow. However, it was unfamiliar to Mercedes who was ignorant about farming.

"Leave it to me. I will overcome the enemies and find out who sent them."

"No, wait...!"

There wasn't time to shout. Silver sword energy wrapped around Mercedes' body, and she was already flying forward.

Kuwaaaaaang!

It was a charge. The distance between Grid and Mercedes widened to dozens of meters in a flash. Then distant clashing sounds rang out.

"...Isn't her personality bold?" Grid felt sorry for the man she liked or would end up marrying her. He didn't know this person would be him.

Kwa kwang! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

Thunder-like roars were heard, and the wind pressure crushed the wheat in the field. Grid was nervous. "Who is she fighting?"

It couldn't be...

"This is Piaro again!"

It was clear that Piaro wouldn't be able to suppress his

enthusiasm once he saw Mercedes' growth. The confused Grid ran to the scene of the battle. He didn't want this fight to happen because he didn't want to see Piaro defeated. Grid still didn't know... Piaro's true value!

Chapter 811

Piario was sitting in the moonlight while moving the hand plow. The result of his experiments in the vampire city... No, the full moon tonight was enough to plant a 'bloody tomato' he had developed with the help of a colleague.

“Field work is fun.”

Piario felt this every time, but farming wasn't a joke. He had to dig at the hard ground, plant seeds in it, and cover them with soil again. The more he repeated this series of exercises, the more efficiently his muscles were trained and the more strength he gained.

“It is thanks to the health and clean outdoor air.”

He sucked the clean air deep into his lungs. It might be exaggerating but he felt that his life was extended by one day every time he took in a breath. It was a sensation he couldn't feel in the vampire cities. The vampire cities were underground, and the flow of air wasn't smooth. He also never got sunburnt because it wasn't sunny. However...

“I'll have to go back soon...”

He couldn't avoid it just because he didn't like it.

Noll's blood was an enormous help for farming because it contained a large number of nutrients. Thanks to Noll's help, Piario could improve the new variety of potatoes that he was planting. Ultimately, he might be able to get a hint on how to grow the golden walnuts.

‘I have to say goodbye to His Majesty tomorrow.’

The reason why Piario had briefly returned to Reinhardt was due to Grid's safety. He had waited in Reinhardt so he could receive Grid's call at any time when Grid was in the empire. Grid had returned unharmed today, meaning Piario no longer had a reason

to stay in Reinhardt.

‘I want to go and see him.’

However, the time was too late. It would be rude to find Grid now. Recently, Piaro had been planting potatoes in the middle of the night, causing him to wake up late.

“Hmm?” Piaro was wishing that morning would come soon when he suddenly stopped moving his hand. He felt turbulence in the atmosphere a few hundred meters away.

“...”

Yet the silence of the night continued. The only sound in the serene farmland was the cries of the night owls. However, Piaro felt certain that... something was approaching. Was he mistaken? No. Piaro farmed using the power of the sun, the earth, the water, and the wind. His keen senses precisely captured the changes in the atmosphere.

“Over there!”

He knew it. Piaro could hear the cry of a woman coming from far away. Her silent footsteps seemed like she was secretly approaching, but her shout showed that wasn’t the case.

‘It was a subconscious hiding of her presence...’

It was at a considerably good level. The moment Piaro felt admiration...

“Stop!” A cry came from the woman’s right side.

“...Huh?” Piaro was startled. It was because the woman’s movement speed was fast enough to exceed his awareness. Her presence had been dozens of meters away, and now it was right in Piaro’s field of vision.

“This is an unexpected guest.” A smile appeared on Piaro’s face as he confirmed the woman’s face.

“P-Piario?!” Mercedes’ eyes widened as she grasped the identity of

the person digging the tunnel. What method had she used to train? Piaro burned with an intense fighting spirit and cried out excitedly, “You have grown a lot in just one month!”

He didn’t ask trivial questions about why Mercedes was now here. Piaro only swung his hand plow with the dream of dueling with a strong person.

“What...?” Mercedes panicked. She had reunited with an old hero in a totally unexpected manner. Rather than feeling joyous, he attacked her randomly? Moreover, it was with a hand plow!

Mercedes frowned as she defended herself with her sword. ‘He seems different from before?’

One month ago, Piaro had attacked her under Grid’s orders, so Mercedes had already experienced Piaro’s power. His attack power with a sickle and a hand plow, instead of a sword, had been surprising. However, Mercedes had been promoted and was now a legend. As long as Piaro didn’t pull out his sword, it should be expected for Mercedes to overtake his hand plow.

Yet it was impossible. Why? It was because this was farmland, and farmlands were Piaro’s field. The aura of nature made Piaro even stronger, like how Demon Slayer Yura who became more powerful in hell. This was something Grid had overlooked because he didn’t become stronger when fighting in the smithy.

“Kuk...!” Piaro continuously took advantage of the hand plow’s short reach and quickness to attack. His attack power was even more threatening compared to one month ago. The fast and powerful Mercedes hurried to defend herself. “As expected from Piaro...! You have become stronger in such a short time!”

Facing a legend with farming equipment...!

Mercedes felt a sense of discomfort and didn’t question why Piaro attacked her. She was well aware of Piaro’s obsession with the strong. Pulling out one more sword, she cried out as she defended

against Piaro's hand plow, "Are you finally reaching the level of a Sword Saint?"

If it was like this...

"I'll help you!"

She would duel wholeheartedly so that the old hero could reach a higher level. A silver sword energy sprung up behind Mercedes. It was in the shape of beautiful wings, reminiscent of an angel. The silver wings—Mercedes' wings—spread out. She had some capacity for flight, and she also constantly released sword energy from the wings in order to deal damage to a target.

Mercedes' great power collided with Piaro. Strong winds like that of a storm rose and ruined the farmland, swirling the grains in the air.

"I'm no longer the young girl from your memories. Draw your sword," Mercedes suggested. However, Piaro was stubborn. Instead of a sword, he drew a sickle. Now, he struck back with a hand plow and sickle.

Mercedes' expression stiffened. "...You will regret it."

Mercedes felt the need to convince Piaro that she was no longer a young girl. She didn't just want to be acknowledged. It was necessary to validate her skills with her future colleagues.

"Sword of Honor."

Then something amazing occurred. Mercedes' two swords hit only one point. Her swift assault with her flapping wings rushed toward Piaro, forcing him to defend.

'Ha!' Piaro defended against a stab that couldn't be followed with an ordinary person's eyes. The hand plow and sickle had been made personally by Grid, yet cracks started to appear on the farming equipment made of materials from Great Demon Belial. The reason for this phenomenon wasn't because Mercedes' two swords were better than Grid's hand plow and sickle.

It was just the limits of farming equipment. Farming equipment used a much smaller amount of metal than weapons, making them less durable. This was a flaw Mercedes had already discovered.

‘I didn’t expect to be attacked with this strategy.’ Piaro admired the fact that Mercedes truly had an amazing insight as he twisted his crossed hand plow and sickle.

Then...

Kakakang!

“...!” Mercedes’ sword was pushed to the side. Piaro expected Mercedes’ stride to become twisted and lose balance. “Hah!”

However, Mercedes’ used transcendental movements to keep her balance. She swung her other sword and grazed Piaro’s chest, turning her upper body along with the sword.

“Draw your sword now, please.”

“The hand plow and sickle are my best weapons. Why should I draw a sword?”

“Stubborn to the end...!”

During the past 12 years, had Piaro become like this to cope with the terrible suffering? Mercedes was convinced of this. ‘It is clear that Piaro has regressed.’

How could he have made progress? How could he have afforded to train his mind and body when it was hard just surviving? Mercedes determined that Piaro had become narrow-minded due to what had happened.

“Knight’s Resolution.” An energy sword formed on her chest, and her mind and body became stronger. Mercedes felt a sense of obligation. She felt obligated to defeat Piaro to remind him of the painful reality and give him a chance to develop further.

‘Piaro must become a Sword Saint.’

What about Kraugel? She couldn’t accept a person she hadn’t

heard of suddenly becoming a sword saint. The moment Mercedes made her resolution...

“Free Farming 7th Style.”

Thousands and then tens of thousands of seeds were scattered in the aftermath of the battle.

“Polishing.”

“...?!”

Pepeng! A series of explosions occurred on the ground and in the air. There were literally thousands or even tens of thousands of explosions. The seeds were what exploded, so the size of each explosion wasn't great. However, it was big enough to compare to magic.

“Ugh...!” Mercedes was trapped in the blast and couldn't take a single step. She wrapped her body with the silver sword energy to minimize the damage.

‘What is this...?’

The seeds suddenly exploded? Was it possible to take advantage of sword energy to do something like this?

‘It can't be!’

Mercedes shrank back in her wings and belatedly realized that Piaro had already reached the same realm as herself. In other words...

“A Sword Saint...” The explosions ended, and Mercedes' expression became jubilant as she opened her ragged wings. “Are you already a Sword Saint?” Mercedes asked.

She was expecting a brilliant resurrection of the old heroes. However, Piaro brutally destroyed her expectations.

“No, I am a farmer.”

“...?”

Was he still joking around right now? The baffled Mercedes tried to open her mouth to speak. Then Piaro pulled out a pitchfork. “Free Farming 4th Style, Plowing the Field.”

Supapak!

The ground around Mercedes was quickly cleared.

“Sowing Seeds! Grow!”

New crops were planted, and Piaro used the energy of nature to make them grow.

“...” Mercedes was stunned as she was suddenly surrounded by a golden wheat field. It was a nightmarish night.

Chapter 812

They were the people who were praised as ‘pillars’ for supporting the empire. However, Mercedes and most of the empire didn’t acknowledge the Five Pillars. No, to be precise, they couldn’t acknowledge the Five Pillars. It was because the Five Pillars didn’t have anything to show. They were strong, but they hadn’t achieved any particular feat.

Well, it could be said that they strengthened the emperor by protecting the emperor’s side, maintaining the empire’s balance as a result. However, on the other hand, what about the former pillars called Piaro and Asmophel? They had defeated countless enemies and protected countless people. They were paragons of the people and the nobles, saving the empire whenever it was in a crisis and giving courage to the imperialists.

Piaro and Asmophel were great people.

“...A farmer.”

‘Don’t joke around.’ Mercedes couldn’t speak her wishes and hopes. It was because her insight was telling her that it was real and not a trick. Piaro’s farming power had indeed created a new field in an instant.

“Why...” Mercedes was pale as she bit her trembling lips. She wanted this moment to be a nightmare. However, this was reality. It was terrible.

“Why are you a farmer?”

The occupation of a farmer was exclusive to the peasants.

Mercedes cared for the people but she was still a noble. She had been taught that there was dignity in every profession, and she acknowledged it. However, Mercedes was nobler than anyone. She couldn’t understand or acknowledge that the Piaro she had long admired was now a humble farmer.

Piario understood her feelings as he was also from the nobility. However, now Piario realized that... “I like being a farmer better than a great swordsman.”

Piario held the pitchfork and pulled out a flail. It was a tool used to thresh grain. “There is no job that is better than another. If we have to discuss it, a farmer is nobler than a great swordsman or Sword Saint. Without a farmer, there is no food for daily use. If there was no delicious food, humanity couldn’t have developed this much and be happy.”

“...”

After all, if there was no hunter, meat or leather couldn’t be gathered. Mercedes rejected Piario’s extreme remarks and felt a sense of duty instead. During the past 12 years, she had felt a sense of duty to help the ‘broken’ Piario recover from his hellish life.

“There isn’t the time for questions and answers.”

Her torn silver wings shone brilliantly again.

Kuoooooh!

Mercedes’ two swords started to glow. The pure brilliance filled the darkness of the night and swallowed up the moon.

“Piario! Regain your mind!”

Mercedes’ attacks were exceptional. The white light attacks created numerous wounds on Piario’s body. Piario was only wearing thin cloth clothes and couldn’t resist Mercedes’ sharp attacks. However, there was a bigger problem. Mercedes started to swap weapons. She accumulated damage on Piario without giving him time to rest and opened the distance to avoid a counterattack.

Of course, Piario was persistent. He used his rapid growth ability to create a barrier of plants and cut off ranged attacks. Rice, wheat, potatoes, and cabbages flew in the air.

“...!” Mercedes withdrew. The grains and vegetables contracted

like they were going to explode. However, this time they didn't explode. They struck her body instead. Piaro linked this attack with the Free Farming 6th Style. It became a barrage of attacks!

Mercedes shook as the flail hit her back. Her defense was quite weak since she was only wearing old leather armor, so she felt great pain. It was more painful than when she was stabbed by a sword or spear. For a noble knight to be beaten by a farmer... Her mental suffering was incomparable.

“How about it? This is the power of a farmer! I am much stronger and healthier than I was during my days as a great swordsman. I can bring happiness to more people! This is it!”

“Kuk...!”

“This is my new path!”

The earth was in turmoil. The effects produced by two legends fighting was gorgeous enough to be compared to the raid of a great demon. It was on a different scale as all the farmland in the path of the two people disappeared. Grid watched the two people fighting from a distance and gulped. “A dragon and tiger fighting...!”

A dragon and tiger...

However, that wasn't Grid's problem right now. He was too busy feeling in awe.

‘Was Piaro always this strong?’

The grains exploded without a break. Crops rose from the ground and stretched around Mercedes' body. Mercedes' actions were severely restricted as her wrists and ankles were caught by the crops that kept growing. Mercedes' perfect balance of swapping between all types of weapons—sword, axe, bow, shield, spear, and so on—on a case by case basis collapsed before the crops.

In the end, was this another nerf? Had Mercedes weakened the moment she became his ally? No, that wasn't it. Mercedes was still strong. It was just that Piaro was stronger than her.

Grid noticed belatedly, “The farmland...”

These were the fields that Piaro had been working on for years. This place...

“It is Piaro’s field...!”

Piario was already beyond the standards of an NPC. The legendary Piario was now a boss monster. Grid’s heart beat excitedly as he had great confidence in Piario who always showed overwhelming strength. He felt that he could infinitely count on Piario.

As for the regret that he felt about Piario becoming a farmer? That had blown away. It would be strange if Grid felt regretful about it. After all, Piario was now fighting several times better than Sword Saint Kraugel!

“Piario!” Grid’s cry resonated in the farmland. “Show me the power of the strongest!”

His shout echoed. It pierced through the sound of the hand plow and sword colliding in the air and into Piario’s ears. Piario’s hands trembled as he held the farming equipment. “If this is Your Majesty’s wish...!”

The wind raged, and Mercedes’ silver wings fluttered like in a storm. Piario’s hands rotated. “Free Farming!”

“...!!” Mercedes’ eyes widened. It was because her two swords were sucked into Piario’s rotating hands.

‘Supreme Swordsmanship 4th style...!’

Piario’s old swordsmanship had been a great contribution to bringing down the great demon Astaroth.

“Watermill!”

It was sublimated and expressed as a more powerful agricultural method. This was enough to neutralize Mercedes’ weapons and cause the ground to shake. Then a water pillar erupted and struck Mercedes’ body.

“Ah...” As Mercedes flew through the air, she realized, ‘One occupation isn’t more noble than another.’

Her way of thinking expanded. At this moment, 1st Knight Mercedes set up her first chivalric code.

‘Don’t be prejudiced.’

At this moment...

[Legendary Knight Mercedes had created a new chivalric code.]

[All of the legendary knight Mercedes’ stats will increase by 10% and the chance of weak spots being exposed will decrease by 80%.]

“...?” Grid’s expression became one of astonishment as he watched the two people duel. Mercedes crashed to the ground and bowed her head to Piaro. “We have been reunited after 12 years. I wasn’t able to show my development but I received your teachings. I am ashamed and thankful.”

“I have also learned a lot. I can’t be assured of victory if you fought with all your power.”

“No. I would’ve lost anyway.”

“Huhu, you are too modest.”

The night deepened with a warm sight.

“Are you just leaving?”

After the battle was over, Mercedes and Piaro unburdened their hearts all night and came to Grid in the morning. Piaro said he would leave for the vampire cities. “Yes. Now that the best knight is with Your Majesty, I can leave feeling reassured.”

“Why are you so diligent? Hasn’t it been a long time since you last reunited with Mercedes? Why don’t you stay for a few more days?”

Piario was a valuable person to Grid, so he didn’t want Piario to be

stressed. Piaro spoke a surprising name to the concerned Grid, “I was shaken when I heard the news about Khan. If I had succeeded in growing the golden walnut a bit sooner... If I had, Khan might’ve been able to live a bit longer.”

Grid’s grief and suffering at Khan’s sudden departure was passed onto Piaro, who lived with regret.

“Your Majesty, I am going to be more diligent.”

“...”

Piaro’s true heart was transmitted to Grid, and Grid could no longer stop him. Feeling thankful, Grid grasped Piaro’s hands. “Thank you. But keep this in mind. Don’t overdo it. I won’t forgive you if you leave like Khan.”

“...Yes.”

It was a touching scene. Mercedes smiled as she saw the leader and subordinate caring about each other.

“Piaro, wait!” Someone’s shout rang out. The person who showed up was Administrator Rabbit. He first politely greeted Grid before handing a piece of paper to Piaro. “This is the cost of the damage dealt to the farmlands yesterday! I’ll get it from your pay!”

“...”

The reason why the Overgeared Kingdom had been able to make steady progress during Grid’s absence was thanks to all the people who worked so hard.

“What amazing children.” Sage Sticks was now the principal of the Overgeared Academy, and the smile couldn’t disappear from his face. “They were a bit slow to learn at first. But once they got the hang of common sense, they evolved remarkably. All 23 children will surely grow into great scholars and magicians.”

They were talking about the children Grid had brought over from

the Tower of Eternity. The children, who had been misunderstood as Grid's children, had recently been the topic of discussion in the Overgeared Kingdom. It was because all the children had genius brains.

A smile appeared on Grid's face. "This is good news. Are the kids healthy?"

"Yes. The shades in their hearts have been removed. I think that the affection Your Majesty showed while bringing the children here healed many of their wounds. You did well. You did very well." Sticks' eyes were warm as he gazed at Grid.

The noble elf species—they disliked the selfish and violent tendencies of humans. Were there any elves in history who felt great affection for humans? There were none. Yet Sticks felt great affection toward Grid who gave him new feelings. Thanks to Grid, Sticks got rid of his prejudices against humans. It was a hasty change.

Simultaneously...

"I finally found it." Merchant King Kir was the first player to find the World Tree's Forest. A species episode was about to be opened by a player, and it was actually in the worst form.

Chapter 813

According to last year's statistics, the number of players who chose a merchant as a class was 41,715,997. It was comparable to the most popular combat classes such as swordsman and magician. Why? That was because it was a class that gave hopes and dreams to ordinary people. In modern society where in-game goods were traded for cash, it was natural that a merchant class which was meant for making money would be popular.

Of course, reality was tough, and most merchants didn't make money. However, a few merchants gained fame by accumulating a huge wealth. A typical figure was the 1st ranked Kir. As he was the first player to make a company, he had been accumulating wealth steadily. He had tens of thousands of people under him, and some people called him the merchant king.

"I finally found it."

The forest of the world tree—it was also known as the Elven Forest, and Kir was the first player to step foot in there.

[You are the first player to discover the elves' territory!]

[It is an achievement that will remain in history! The first discovery will give you various benefits!]

[You can easily raise affinity with the elves, and you will receive a 20% discount on the prices of items purchased in elven villages. There will be 20% more profit when selling goods.]

[Hunting in the elf territory will increase experience rate by 20%, and item drop rate will increase by 10%.]

[Mana regeneration rate is permanently increased by 8%.]

"Hoh! This is more than I expected."

With platinum hair, emerald eyes, and pure white skin that blended beautifully, Kir seemed like a typical handsome nobleman

in movies and novels. He checked his first discovery benefits and glanced behind him. “You can come in now.”

As soon as Kir gave permission...

“Isn’t the air somewhat different?”

“It is sweet every time I breathe. The sunshine is exceptionally pleasant. I’d like to build a house here.”

A group of people entered the forest. They were players who were armed with high-level equipment. Among them, the man with the ID of Boutian used magic. “Magic Detection.”

Supaak! His mana extended a few dozen meters and searched the surrounding life forms. Boutian reported, “There are many small animals. It seems that the elves have no defenses at the boundaries of the forest.”

“It is peaceful.”

The elves had been living in this forest for hundreds of years. It was hard to expect them to be vigilant when they had been completely cut off from the outside world and lived their own lives. Of course, this was a good thing for Kir.

“I am sorry that I can’t enjoy the bonus game but...” Kir’s mouth spread into a deep smile as he stopped talking. It contained a meanness that wasn’t shown before. No, it was right to say that his true nature was being expressed.

Who was Kir? He was a person who deceived others, trampled on them, and accumulated wealth from stealing in order to reach the 1st merchant ranking. The most appropriate description for him was ‘evil.’ The usual mild and remote impression? It was just a mask to distract the other person.

“Let’s get started,” Kir gave the order. His silent colleagues started to slash at him with a sword.

“Cough! Kuaaaaak!”

Merchants had no way to invest points in stats to increase their physical abilities. Kir's defense was terrible due to his low stats. despite the expensive armor he was wearing. His health fell to the bottom in a flash, and he started to flee. His colleagues, or former colleagues, chuckled as they watched him flee into the forest.

"It is useless trying to escape with such slow footsteps. Won't he be caught by us very quickly?"

"If he wants to run away, shouldn't he run away faster?"

"D-Dammit! S-Save me! Anyone out there?" Kir shouted in every direction, but there was no reaction. His shouts just echoed in the forest. The laughs of the traitors grew louder.

"There isn't anyone here except us. Who are you asking for help from?"

"Do you want a bear to show up and protect you? Stupid! Kakaka!"

The fierce pursuit of Kir followed. Kir had no time to breathe as he ran. The pursuers, who were faster than him, hummed as they slowly gave chase without killing him.

"Shit...!" Frustrated, Kir's eyes reddened as he was constantly hit by bushes and branches. The pursuers closely followed him.

"I'm tired of this. Let's finish this fun game. Yes?" This was spoken by a woman who destroyed every bush in the way because she didn't want to become dirty. Kir saw the killing intent in her eyes and cried out desperately, "Why? Why are you doing this all of a sudden? We're colleagues! Why are you suddenly attempting to harm me?"

Deep in the forest, Kir's unfortunate cries rang out in the middle of the world tree forest. The woman shrugged. "What colleagues? We just wanted your money from the beginning. Now, do you know what you have to do?"

The woman placed her scimitar to the neck of the frightened Kir.

“If you want to live, give me money. I will spare you if you give enough money to satisfy us. Okay? Rich. Man.”

“Ick...!” Kir gritted his teeth. The horror and frustration that filled his expression vanished like they had been lies, and anger took their place. “Using people for money...! You are worst than beasts!”

“Oh, my. What is this? Beasts? We are people. Most people are greedy like us, apart from freaks like you. Aren’t we normal?” The woman’s scimitar neared Kir’s neck, soaking Kir’s collar with blood. “Give me your money.”

Kir was at the crossroad of life and death. He gulped as he feared death. “I don’t want to...!”

“What?”

“Justice is shouting in my heart! I would rather choose an honorable death than listen to the demands of people like you!”

“Are you crazy?”

“No! I’m fine! I am sane! I absolutely won’t succumb! If I surrender, you will keep doing this and new victims will appear!”

“Hah, you are really a freak. Then die.”

Tsk. The woman clicked her tongue and raised her weapon.

Puk! An arrow flew without a sound and penetrated the woman’s shoulder.

“...?” The woman and all her colleagues were amazed.

“Who is it?”

“There are people in this forest?”

A breeze blew in the chaos. The bushes swayed, and a woman who boasted a perfect beauty emerged. Her perfect ratio and pointed ears revealed her identity.

“E-Elf?”

“I-Is this an elf forest?”

The number of elves was so small that it couldn't be compared to humans. There was a rumor that there were only 100,000 elves on the continent. Nevertheless, why was it that the elves could protect their territory from the greedy humans? That was simple. It was because they were strong. The elves' innate archery and spirits were so great that humans couldn't afford to go against them.

The groups of humans who tried to kill Kir stopped immediately. They put away their weapons and raised their arms while the elf pointed a bow at them.

“Leave this sacred forest right away. This isn't a place to be corrupted by humans like you.”

“H-Hik!” Grateful that they could escape alive, the humans no longer clung to Kir. They didn't look back as they ran away.

“Allowing access to humans... Are the wards old?” Beniyaru, the white-haired elf who gave off a haughty impression, muttered something about ‘wards.’ Then she gazed at Kir. Kir bowed his head. “T-Thank you for your help! I will definitely pay you back!”

“There is no need.”

“Ah! I-I'm really sorry. I'll leave right away... Ugh!” Remembering that this was a place where human access wasn't allowed, Kir got up hurriedly, only to flop down again. He couldn't support his body due to all his wounds. “I-I'm really sorry. I will take a short break and then leave immediately.”

With a good face and a pure attitude, Kir's appearance was different from the ordinary humans in the elves' memories. Unable to catch a glimpse of any mean desires, Beniyaru said, “I heard your conversation with them. You would rather choose death than listen to such a vile request?”

“...You can call me stupid. I dislike greedy people. It would be

better to die than to give money to them.” A small smile crossed Beniyaru’s mouth.

“Follow me. I’ll guide you to the village.”

“Huh? Can I visit your village despite being a human...?”

“I think you will be okay. You are the first guest in hundreds of years. Stay in the village and heal your wounds until those greedy people waiting outside the forest have left.”

“T-Thank you!” Kir’s face brightened. His innocent smile didn’t induce any rejection in the elf. The merchants’ high charm stat, friendliness, and the first finder’s benefits overlapped together, producing an excellent effect.

-Wait one more day before leaving, Kir sent a whisper as he followed the elf.

-Yes, I understand.

The whisper was sent to the person who betrayed him just a moment ago. In other words, Kir gave a command to the woman who had placed the scimitar at his neck. It was all an act... an act to approach the elves naturally!

-List of people who can be appointed as leader of a knights division-

[Mercedes]

[Mercedes can lead a total of 50 knights.

Mercedes’ knights will have physical damage increased by 12%, defense by 12%, attack speed by 5% and movement speed by 7%.

The effects are permanent as long as the person belongs to the knights division.

Knights Division’s Passive Skills: Increased Health Regeneration (High), Increase Mana Regeneration (Medium), Decreased Stamina

Consumption (High)]

“...”

Until now, only Piaro and Asmophel had been able to be appointed as a knights division leader. Even Chucksley couldn't be appointed despite being one of the best knights of the Eternal Kingdom. In other words, any NPCs who could be appointed as the leader of a knights division meant they had great value. However, Mercedes passed the level of 'great.'

'It is the level of a complete scam...'

Piaro increased the group's attack power by 10%, attack speed by 3%, and movement speed by 5%. Meanwhile, Asmophel increased magic damage by 5% and reduced skill cooldown by 8%. The presences of those two were great enough. However, the effects of Mercedes' presence was twice as great as theirs.

Increase attack and defense by 12%... It was comparable to enhanced items. This was huge when the effects were applied to high-level players like Chris and Pon.

Gulp! Grid swallowed his saliva. He looked solemn for a moment before opening his mouth, "Mercedes."

"Yes, Your Majesty."

"Can I join your knights division?"

"...?"

"It... isn't possible? Haha." It wasn't a genuine laugh. Grid trembled with a terrible regret.

[The Legendary Knights' Overgeared Division has been created.]

The third Overgeared Knights Division was born after the Overgeared Knights and Overgeared Magicians. Only the best members of the Overgeared Kingdom could join this new division. Lauel joined it due to his skill level and was stunned. "I... The Legendary Overgeared Knights Division...!"

He should be happy when he looked at the stats, but why were tears flowing from his eyes? Lauel was sad.

Chapter 814

This was after forming the knights division.

“Are you talking about my armor?” Mercedes responded to Grid’s call and was confused. “Your Majesty will make armor for me?”

“Yes.”

Mercedes’ reacted to Grid’s words like a bolt had come out of the blue, “That is ridiculous. Your Majesty can’t work for your subjects.”

Of course, Mercedes knew that Grid’s root was a blacksmith. However, she was currently talking common sense. Which king in the world would put in labor for their subjects? A king’s subjects couldn’t be given priority over a king’s convenience.

“Please reconsider.”

Grid shook his head at Mercedes’ concern. “In the end, it is for me. The stronger you are, the stronger I am. Don’t feel burdened.”

Mercedes’ main armor was heavy armor. It was right to say that she wasn’t complete when wearing leather armor. Nevertheless, she had competed with Piaro for a while in his field. She was a really lovely person. Grid wanted to make her complete as soon as possible. “Let’s go. There are many things I have to make in addition to your armor.”

“...I understand.” In the end, Mercedes was unable to break Grid’s determination and bowed deeply. Her liking toward Grid was growing day by day.

“Will your parents be happy if you die in a place like this?”

“You...! Don’t mention my parents!”

“I sincerely pity your parents. How sad would they be because their child committed a crime and ended up in prison?”

“...”

A terrible criminal was trapped in Reinhardt’s dungeon.

Reidorn—he was the worst criminal who had tried to assassinate Grid during the founding of the Overgeared Kingdom. They wanted to find out who was behind him. This was left to the 1st ranked orator, Huroi. Huroi’s daily routine began with him questioning Reidorn.

“If you want to see your parents again, then tell me! How dare a motherless person like you try to assassinate King Grid?!”

“Kuk! Kukuk! You stupid person. How many times do I have to tell you? It was my own plan. I didn’t receive instructions from anyone.”

“The king of a nation... It was your own idea to attempt assassinating a king on the day of the founding ceremony? Who would believe this obvious lie? Your parents won’t believe it!”

“You bastard!” Reidorn wanted to regain his composure, only to become agitated again. “I told you to stop bringing up my parents!”

“Why do you get angry every time I talk about your parents? Am I cursing your parents?”

That was right. Huroi wasn’t cursing Reidorn’s parents. He just frequently mentioned them. However, it was strange. Reidorn snapped every time Huroi mentioned his parents. This was the power of Huroi’s Taunt skill. Huroi used Taunt every time he mentioned Reidorn’s parents. So, why did he bother doing this? It was related to Huroi’s personal taste, not out of any particular efficiency.

“Hrmm...” Huroi faced the growling Reidorn, who was tied up. He was forced to acknowledge Reidorn, who had been imprisoned for more than half a year and never opened his mouth. “I didn’t want to do this... Tsk.” A shadow fell over Huroi’s face. He looked reluctant.

Reidorn's heart became anxious. 'Did he prepare a terrible torture...?'

Gulp. Reidorn swallowed his saliva as his body shook. However, his mind became stronger. 'I will never yield.'

Reidorn never intended to reveal that he was a Red Knight and also a solo number knight. No, he couldn't say it. His attempt to assassinate Grid had been purely from his own thoughts. That's right. He hadn't received any commands. Reidorn had tried to assassinate Grid because he thought Grid would become a threat later. If Reidorn's identity were revealed, a diplomatic problem could occur. It could even cause damage to the empire. After all, Grid's power, which Reidorn had personally experienced, was a threat to the empire!

'I would rather die!' Reidorn pledged to keep his mouth shut.

Duguen! Duguen! His heart beat faster. In the midst of his growing fear...

"Bring it in," Huroi ordered.

Then guards entered while carrying a small box.

Gulp!

What was in this box? Was it a tool to dig out his eyeballs? Reidorn's imagination was moving toward the negative things. His face paled as Huroi opened the box in front of him. In the box...

Chirp! Chirp!

There was a chick. It was a small, yellow, and cute chick.

"...?" Reidorn was confused. How did a chick pop out of a box that he thought would contain torture tools? Reidorn was puzzled as the chick moved toward him.

Chirp chirp! The chick's little black eyes looked up at Reidorn. He seemed to mistake Reidorn as his mother. Reidorn had faced torture every day for a long time. Now that he saw a cute animal,

he couldn't help smiling. He felt a desire to touch the chick's fur.

Huroi's cold voice entered his ears, "Something urgent happened. I won't be back here for a while. Enjoy a few days of peace."

"You, what are you planning? What is this chick?"

"You don't know?"

Huroi didn't answer and left with the guards.

Chirp chirp!

Reidorn was left alone with the chick and felt peace for the first time in ages. His heart was warmed. Meanwhile, the prison guards questioned Huroi.

"Can I ask what the meaning of that chick is?"

"Why are you giving the wicked criminal time to heal his heart?"

"Sigh..." Wanting to smoke a cigarette, Huroi gave a deep sigh before replying to the confused guards. "I will eat that chick when it is a bit older."

"Yes...?"

"It will be in front of Reidorn."

"..."

"The chick he shares a deep bond with...!"

"..."

"...I will put it in various vegetables and boil it."

"T-That...!"

"You are worse than a great demon!"

The guards got goosebumps. The method of psychological torture that Huroi planned was so horrific that it was creepy. Of course, Huroi didn't feel comfortable doing this. However, what could he do?

“He is the one who made me evil...”

“Ahhh...”

It would be a perfect scene if there was the sound effect of thunder, but today was a clear sky without any clouds.

“Where are you going?” Mercedes asked as she followed Grid. She thought Grid would go to the smithy, but he walked out of the castle instead.

‘Is there a smithy outside the castle?’

Grid explained to Mercedes, “Starting from today, I will do the work of a blacksmith more efficiently.”

He consumed a lot of time and effort whenever he made an item. Additionally, he had to maintain his concentration for several days. The result was often good, but there was a big problem with this method. There was no time to hunt. In the last few months, Grid had been in a stagnant position. He would soon be pushed out of the top 10 of the unified rankings.

This was the limit of a non-combat class. Unlike the combat classes that could devote themselves to hunting, Grid also had to act as a blacksmith and had too little time to concentrate on leveling up. In this regard, Grid worked hard. The idea which came to mind was the portable furnace. Thanks to the white phosphorus wood, he could get the desired firepower whenever and wherever he wanted.

“In the future, I will make items at the hunting grounds.”

Grid had tried to challenge it in the past. He’d made items in the hunting area while Noe, Randy, and the God Hands hunted. However, it hadn’t been effective. At the time, he hadn’t had white phosphorus wood, so there was a limit to the firepower that a portable furnace could exert. He had only been able to produce low-level items.

‘But it is different now.’

Grid made a confident smile and pulled out the map. His destination was the new hunting ground Kraugel had given him—the Boundary Forest. Due to unknown wards, it was said that the deep parts of the forest were unable to be accessed.

“A forest with unusually sweet fruits...”

If Grid took out the ‘Media Mountains Honey’, a monster called ‘bear-wolf’ would appear. It was very powerful and took strong players a long time to hunt. However, Kraugel said the monster gave the experience of a field boss.

“Is the information reliable? How does Kraugel know the method to summon the bear-wolf?”

“He was taking a break and eating honey bread.”

It was valuable information that Kraugel had given Grid in return for the White Tiger Sword.

“In any case, he is a good friend.” Grid always felt proud when he thought about Kraugel.

Mercedes was filled with a strange jealousy when she saw Grid’s smile and gave negative feedback, “I am aware of the bear-wolves. They are monsters that combine the destructive power of a bear and the agility of a wolf. It will be stronger than Your Majesty anticipates.”

Yet Grid wanted to hunt these monsters while making armor? That was impossible to do. Grid made a confident expression as he looked at the worried Mercedes. “I have you by my side, so why do I need to be worried?”

“Don’t you need experience? If you don’t hunt the bear-wolves yourself, will you be able to grow?”

“No, you won’t be hunting. You just need to season them for me.”

“Season... what are you saying?”

Why was he suddenly talking about cooking? Grid explained to the baffled Mercedes, “You will hit the bear-wolf as hard as you can when it appears. Then won’t it be angry at you?”

“Yes, I see.”

“From then on, you just need to tank. While you tank, I will finish it off with my pets, the God Hands and the Overgeared Skeletons. Then I can get experience while sitting down and making armor, and my pets and the Overgeared Skeletons will grow as well.”

“I understand. I will do so,” Mercedes responded energetically! Despite being the strongest person, her role was to assist. This was the legendary knight bus, and Grid was the only passenger on the bus she was driving.

Chapter 815

“It is tougher than I thought.”

He didn't know how many times he had checked the map during the last four days of the journey. It was difficult to find the right path. Grid was still unable to find his destination. However, it wasn't because he was lost. Grid had a good sense of direction. It hadn't been a fluke that he discovered the North End Cave and Pagma's Rare Book.

“Um...” Grid's gaze fell on the map again and again.

Kraugel said that the Boundary Forest was right there at the point where the Beldon Volcanic Zone and the Lilton Desert overlapped. That's right. The Boundary Forest was a place not marked on the map, so it was no wonder that it was hard to find.

“Go east from the Beldon Volcanic area, west from the Lilton Desert...” Grid's eyes narrowed. It was irritating since the schedule was different from what he had planned.

The silent Mercedes finally asked carefully, “Is Kraugel a credible person?”

“Huh? Why are you asking all of a sudden?”

“I can't believe that there is a forest here.”

This was a volcanic area where lava flowed, a desert where not a single blade of grass could be found. Yet there was a forest at the center? How could vegetation grow in this hot temperature? Grid replied to Mercedes' reasonable doubt, “You can trust him.”

Of course, this world wasn't nice enough to have unconditional beliefs just because a person was a friend. Still, Grid didn't doubt Kraugel.

“He is a friend with high pride. It isn't in his nature to lie.”

“He is a... Sword Saint?”

“You know?”

“Yes. He has been famous in the empire for several months already.”

The empire showed a lukewarm attitude toward Pagma's Descendant, but they had a great response to a Sword Saint. Some people argued that the Sword Saint should be acquired while others insisted that the Sword Saint should be eliminated. The emperor's choice was...

“Try and win him over.”

“I see. Well, it is natural for Kraugel to be coveted by the emperor.”

Grid had heard rumors, but to think that Kraugel was given such special treatment...? Grid's pride wasn't hurt even when he realized this fact. Was it because he acknowledged that a Sword Saint was a better class than Pagma's Descendant? No. It was because Grid had a great pride that wouldn't be swept away by the evaluation of other people. So what if he was given a low evaluation? The truth was different.

“Kraugel rejected the emperor's offer?”

“Yes, that's right.”

“Weren't you quite angry?”

“...”

Grid was well aware of Mercedes' personality from the first time they met. She had an excessive loyalty and felt unconditional resentment toward those who went against the will of her master. From the position of an enemy, it was a terrible personality, but it was great now that they were allies.

“You can relax your emotions and fight when you meet later. One or two years later, you will be so strong that victory will be guaranteed.”

‘Please don’t incite an unnecessary fight.’

Grid had already experienced several times that a confrontation between the strong and the strong was a great help to each other. As such, seeing that Mercedes could go one step further, Grid wanted to set up a confrontation with Sword Saint Kraugel for her.

‘It will be a great help for Kraugel as well.’

Duguen! Duguen! Grid’s heart beat faster as he imagined a confrontation with the further developed Kraugel. His obsession with Kraugel was a reaction to the regret he had felt in the 3rd National Competition. Why did he feel sorry as the winner? It was because he had won before he revealed his true power. Truth be told, Grid felt empty after the finale match with Kraugel. It was different from the exhilaration he felt during the 2nd National Competition.

‘It is an undeniable fact.’

He had reserved his strength and won against Kraugel. However, who could he tell this truth to? No one would believe him if he said it.

‘There is no need to speak in the first place.’ It would just be seen as a useless pretense.

The grinning Grid stopped walking. He was at the end of the lava zone, which was also at the end of the desert. Then an unexpected phenomenon occurred.

[The World Tree’s Necklace is responding!]

Grid pulled the necklace out of his inventory.

[World Tree’s Necklace]

[Rating: Legendary]

Durability: 20/22

* 20% increase in strength and agility in elven territory.

* 150% increase in mana regeneration in elven territory.

* 1.2 times increase in movement speed in elven territory.

Before she became a legend, Povia was a loner who wasn't recognized by humans or elves.

This necklace was given to her by the world tree, her only friend.

Weight: 50]

A necklace made from tree bark being weaved together—it was one of the rewards he had gotten from Death Knight Povia on the Behen Archipelago. This response meant...

Gulp! Grid made a guess and wore the necklace. Then...

[Strength and agility will increase by 20%.]

[Mana regeneration rate will increase by 150%.]

[Movement speed has increased by 1.2 times.]

“Indeed...!”

Grid realized two facts. Firstly, he was already in the Boundary Forest. However, it was impossible to perceive it because of the wards. Secondly, the Boundary Forest was the forest of the world tree. It was the territory of the elves!

“Now if I can release the wards...!”

...But how? Kraugel had only shown him the location of the Boundary Forest, not how to enter it.

‘Why?’

Did he want to provoke Grid? Or was it a test? That was impossible. Kraugel had given him the location of the Boundary Forest out of pure kindness. He wouldn't hide something from the information he had given willingly.

“Maybe...”

Could the wards around the forest be stronger than when

Kraugel visited here? It was a reasonable hypothesis when he recalled the rumor that elves hated humans.

“I’m certain. The elves must have been disturbed by Kraugel’s movements in here and strengthened the wards.”

Grid was confident of this. His difficulty was on how to release the ward.

“The general information on how to release a ward...”

It was to grasp the principle of the ward or release it with magic. These two methods were widely used. Grid hadn’t learned the magic associated with releasing wards, so he had to solve it with the former method. It meant he had to use his head, and that was terrible.

“F... Um...” Grid was about to curse only to close his mouth with an awkward expression. He couldn’t curse in front of a person who had just become his subordinate.

“Kuoong.” He became more frustrated because he couldn’t swear. Grid was struggling when Mercedes asked him, “Is there anything I can help you with?”

“I want to release the ward here but I don’t know how to do it...”

Mercedes’ thin eyebrows rose. The fact that her master didn’t expect anything of her touched her pride.

“I will just smash it,” she spoke in a cold voice.

“Huh?”

Smashing the ward...? Grid didn’t understand and made a strange expression.

“If my physical strength is three times stronger than the person who made the ward, I can just destroy it with force. Shall I test it out? Let’s see who is better.”

Kuwoooooh!

Mercedes pulled out her swords while energy blades bent around her. She swung them once at the air, creating an opening. It was as if Grid was looking at Kraugel's Space Sword. The sky, the desert, the volcanoes, and the earth split in half. Then the desert area and volcanic area disappeared like they were mirages. After that, a huge forest appeared in the place where the volcanic area and desert had been located. The scale of the forest was too large to determine. It was like a country in itself.

"...Amazing." Grid was marveling at Mercedes' swordsmanship, not the size of the forest. The elves' magic had created a perfect ward. Grid realized that the heat of the volcano and the desert was a lie and asked, "Is this the elemental magic that I have only heard about?"

"I think so. They seem to have borrowed the power of the fire elemental to make the volcanic zone and the power of the earth elemental to make the desert. They were different from simple hallucinations."

"Elementals... Have you ever met them before?"

"No."

"Ah." Grid belatedly noticed that the sun flowing through the green leaves shone on Mercedes' face. Yes, Mercedes was also shaken.

'Right...'

They had discovered the territories of the elves who had been separated from humanity for hundreds of years. How could anyone be calm before this amazing discovery? Grid watched Mercedes' cute appearance as she looked around the forest and felt warm.

'I didn't receive the first discovery reward, so someone else came here before me.'

It wasn't Kraugel. Kraugel didn't even know that this was the territory of the elves.

“Kraugel couldn’t enter the forest? Or did he simply lag behind others? If it is the latter, the world was very wide.”

It was amazing that there were people ahead of Kraugel. Who could it be? Grid’s eyes shone as he pulled out the portable furnace and started to place firewood inside it. On one side, he prepared an anvil, a hammer, and a huge bucket for quenching.

“...” Mercedes felt it was absurd as she watched Grid turn the forest into a smithy. “Your Majesty. This is an ideal opportunity to meet the elves. Isn’t it right to look for the elves first?”

Some people misunderstood the elves as a species from fantasies. Thus, they were unfamiliar with elves. The elves were targets of great interest. Even Mercedes wanted to meet an elf right away. However, Grid had no interest in this.

“I can meet an elf every day.”

“Huh?”

He could meet an elf on a daily basis? Mercedes didn’t understand what Grid was saying.

“Moreover, it is a high elf. He is Sage Sticks. You didn’t know that he was in the Overgeared Kingdom? Doesn’t the empire know anything?”

“...Ah.” Mercedes couldn’t be unaware of this. In fact, she had forgotten due to an incident from a few days ago. Five days ago was the day that Grid had arrived in Reinhardt.

“Grid!” Sticks had run to find Grid. “Increase the number of teachers at the academy! I have to teach 12 classes a day alone, 12! I don’t have any time to rest!”

“I understand. Tell Administrator Rabbit.”

“No, he is the problem! He says that he can’t increase the number of teachers due to a lack of finances! He is an unscrupulous human who is abusing me to save money!” Sticks cried out, feeling it was

unjust. He seemed like such an ordinary person that Mercedes had forgotten... She had completely forgotten the fact that Sticks was a high elf and sage.

“...I understand.” Mercedes was reminded of the memories she had instinctively sealed. She nodded as if she understood. “Then you have no reason to look for the elves.”

“Right? In any case, they will just be men.”

“Men?”

“Ah, there was something like that. In any case, let’s begin in earnest.” Grid rolled up his sleeves and handed Mercedes some Media Mountain honey which he bought with a lot of money. Then he held a hammer. “I will do the hammering while you eat honey.”

This was the first important mission she had received since she started serving Grid, but why did she feel that it was somewhat lacking?

“Yes...” Mercedes responded weakly and pulled out her swords. Simultaneously, an arrow flying through the air was split apart.

“What is this rudeness?” Mercedes looked sharply in front of her. The appearance of elves with angry expressions entered her field of view. The white-haired elf named Beniyaru shouted, “We hate you...! Humans deserve to be extinct!”

“Wow.”

Talking about extinction all of a sudden? Was creating a fire in the middle of the forest that big of a sin? Grid sweated as he belatedly realized, ‘...It is a sin,’

However, he didn’t know it yet... The reason why the elves hated humans wasn’t because of Grid and Mercedes.

Chapter 816

Let's consider when it's the most annoying time to play a game:

- When an enhancement failed...
- A player's level not going up no matter how many mobs were killed, dying and losing experience...
- Failing a raid, or succeeding in a raid only to not get a jackpot...
- Struggling like a dog to clear a quest, only to receive a poor reward...
- Finding out that the class chosen was rubbish...
- Selling an item for a low price, only for the value to skyrocket a few days later...
- Witnessing someone else get a jackpot, and so on...

There were so many moments that they couldn't be listed individually. The culture of the game brought players a lot of entertainment, but it also brought them extreme loss and stress.

“Ah...”

Grid was the same as everyone else, despite being at the peak of the players. He gained wealth and honor from the game, but he still felt loss and stress from it. The current situation was the same. The elves were another species that had been separated from humanity for hundreds of years. They couldn't be met even when Grid wanted to meet them, so why did they show up right now?

“...Why did they come up when I am using the white phosphorus wood?!!” Grid screamed as an arrow swept past his cheek and struck his portable furnace.

Puk!

[The portable furnace is hit.]

[The portable furnace won't function properly.]

[You need to be careful.]

“Oh!”

The white phosphorus wood was still burning in the furnace that had a hole in it. The wood, which was difficult to transport from the East Continent, was consumed meaninglessly.

‘Now there are only 80 of them left!’

Since he needed a minimum of three or four pieces to achieve the desired firepower, the limited number of white phosphorus wood gave Grid considerable pressure. Moreover, as he couldn’t cross to the East Continent currently due to danger from the yangbans, the white phosphorus wood was truly a valuable resource.

Yet the elves had suddenly appeared and caused him to waste four pieces of white phosphorus wood. As such, Grid couldn’t help feeling heated up. “You are just pretty!”

It seemed that the rumor of how Kim Taehee and Kim Yisun were just like potatoes when compared to the elves of the elven kingdom was true. Among the elves who appeared in front of Grid, there were none who weren’t beautiful. The elves’ perfect beauty was comparable to the beauty of the best beauties he had seen so far—Yura, Jishuka, Irene, Sua, Mercedes, and so on. It wasn’t at all difficult to make a comparison since Mercedes was right next to him.

However, so what if they were pretty? They weren’t his anyway!

“Their chests are also small... Ugh!”

Puk!

[You have suffered 8,980 damage.]

“Your Majesty!”

“God Hands!”

Arrows flew without any sound. Grid could figure out the orbits of the arrows using his high agility and insight, but it was

impossible to pick out the arrow that came flying immediately after the first one.

‘It is like archery from the movies.’

If an arrow was shot first and then another one, the second one would closely follow the target and hit the target a second time. Since ancient times, archery had been said to be the best on the Korean peninsula, and this was a high-level archery technique. The Korean players were proud of this.

‘Bullshit!’ Grid didn’t care about such things. “Pagma’s Swordsmanship!”

Tang! Tatatatang! Grid started a sword dance as Mercedes and the God Hands protected him.

Puk! Then an arrow flew through a gap in the God Hands and pierced his thigh, interrupting the skill casting. This was the moment when he was caught by the deadly disadvantage of Pagma’s Swordsmanship.

‘Shit! The arrows are too fast!’

The power, speed, and covertness of the arrows were topnotch. The elves’ archery reminded Grid of the death knight of the legendary archer Povia. This meant that the skills of the elves were greater than the rankers. Arrows started to pour down like rain. The God Hands couldn’t endure the cumulative damage and fell into a stiffened state, exposing Grid to danger.

“Vaintz’ Swordsmanship 3rd style.”

Right now, Grid had a knight as a bus... No, it was a legendary knight. Mercedes appeared in front of Grid and protected him. “Fly Sword Energy.”

A storm occurred along the direction of Mercedes’ rotation. It was a silver storm that crushed the bushes, trees, and rocks equally well.

“Kyaaaack!”

Kwang! Kwa kwa kwa kwang!

The elves were hit by the storm of energy swords and fell in all directions. Their sharp screams echoed in the vast forest. However, there was something even more surprising.

‘Their health only decreased by half?’

All the elves survived, and their health was even maintained at 50%. They had an unbelievable defense despite the fact that only leaves were barely covering their bodies. It was also a persistent vitality that didn’t fit their delicate bodies.

‘These are elves...! Then how strong is that elf?’ Grid’s gaze was focused on the white-haired elf. The elf called Beniyaru was a named elf, and her name was in a golden color.

“Your Majesty, you better avoid them.” Mercedes was also aware of the seriousness of the situation. The elves were stronger than rumored. Mercedes decided that protecting Grid while dealing with them was virtually impossible. Then...

“Avoid them?” Her judgment scratched Grid’s pride. Grid stared straight into Mercedes’ eyes. He used Quick Movements and spoke as two arrows flew, “You are mistaken. I’m not a weakling to be protected.”

Grid’s footwork accelerated. It was the effect of Quick Movements. He avoided the flying arrows and safely used Pagma’s Swordsmanship this time.

“Uh!”

“What...?”

The elves who were hiding behind a tree and sniping were amazed. Their behavior was being controlled by an unknown force, and their fingertips couldn’t move. It was an oppressive authority that couldn’t be rejected unless they had a status

resistance. The bows and arrows in the hands of the elves fell to the ground.

“Pagma’s Swordsmanship!” Grid had been dressed for comfort when making an item, but he now swapped to Valhalla of Infinite Affection. He did this quickly with the help of the God Hands. Grid quickly moved while the elves were showing a gap. “Wave.”

“...!” The elves and Mercedes were startled because Grid’s momentum was reminiscent of a volcano. Strong, destructive, and widespread—the elves were swept away in it, suffering a lot of damage while losing their swiftness.

“Now!”

Who was the cry meant for? Naturally...

“Yes!” It was Mercedes. She was amazed and thrilled at the grandeur of the king she served.

“Vaintz’ Swordsmanship 4th style, Raising the Sword Energy.” A storm of silver sword energy sprang up from below. Swept away by the attacks of the two people, the bodies of the elves flew through their air.

“Pagma’s Swordsmanship, Transcended Link.”

“Vaintz’ Swordsmanship 5th style, Sowing Sword Energy.”

Grid and Mercedes chose ranged skills as the final blow and aimed at the unaware elves. No, they attempted to start a rampage.

“Kuk...!”

“Uh!”

Grid and Mercedes groaned at the same time.

This was due to Beniyaru. Her bow struck Grid’s neck while her fist, which contained a fire elemental, slammed into Mercedes’ abdomen. Grid flew back into a rock while Mercedes flew toward a tree to the left, stopping with the power of her silver wings. Meanwhile, Beniyaru restrained her fellow elves, who landed

safely on the ground with the help of the wind elementals.

A smile emerged on Grid's face. 'It is a sign.'

The fact that the heavens had brought him a legendary knight was preparation for a greater threat. How many of them were hidden in every corner of Satisfy's huge world? Grid judged Beniyaru to be on the same level as Mercedes.

'However, Mercedes has the disadvantage.'

It was natural as this was the world tree forest, the home of the elves. Furthermore...

'Just like me, Mercedes doesn't know anything about elementals.'

It was an unknown power. As Grid watched Beniyaru alternate between the fire and wind elementals, respectively called 'Yutan' and 'Sulle', his regret toward the white phosphorus wood disappeared. At this moment, Grid was purely focused on the enemy in front of him.

Beniyaru's ridiculing words entered his ears, "She is a pretty decent human, but you aren't."

Elves were classified as a superior species to humans, like the water clan, vampires, and the evil eyes. Beniyaru's self-esteem as one of the 12 Te was extremely high. (TL: Te= a one-word character that has multiple meanings, none of which seem to fit. I've decided to just translate it literally)

A human was just an oddity from her point of view. She didn't like that the weak male was looking at her with challenging eyes.

"Yutan, Sulle."

The elementals were the symbol of the elves' strength. Among them, there were only 15 elves who had two or more elementals. They were the 12 Te and three kings.

"Help me."

The bowstring Beniyaru pulled back was surrounded by flames. Suddenly, a wind blew from the south, and Grid's hair moved. Then Beniyaru let go of the bowstring. The fire arrow accelerated with the wind and reached Grid.

“How dare you?!” Mercedes was moving even before Beniyaru fired the bow. Her sword appeared before Grid and cut the two arrows. A huge explosion occurred. Mercedes' leather armor was swept up in the explosion and became rags.

“You—!” Mercedes was furious as her milky-white shoulders were exposed. If an elf were killed here, wouldn't the diplomatic relationship between the Overgeared Kingdom and the elves become completely impossible? Mercedes wasn't concerned about this and revealed her power. She had no intention of forgiving Beniyaru for attacking her king.

However, Grid acted before she did. As he entered the Blackening state, he stepped across in front of Mercedes and arrived before Beniyaru.

“Trivial thing!” Beniyaru hated both humans and demonkin. From her point of view, the blackened Grid was an unacceptable existence. Her fire and wind elementals responded to her rage, causing her body to be surrounded by a burning vortex. It was a powerful shield that couldn't be pierced with ordinary physical and magic forces. The shield was also a weapon that swallowed up nearby objects.

“Your Majesty!”

Then just as Mercedes was wrapping her silver wings around Grid to protect him, lightning struck.

‘What?’

Wasn't the sky clear a little while ago? The elves' gazes headed to the sky and saw a completely grey sky peeking through the thick leaves of the forest. Grid whispered to Mercedes who was holding

him, “You should get far away if you don’t want to be hurt.”

“...!”

A knight who existed for her master was told to get away? Mercedes was about to refuse, only for her eyes to widen as she hastily escaped. This was because she detected an unfamiliar energy from the sky. It was almost as if...

‘Astaroth?’

Demonic lightning bolts were aimed at the feet or heads of the elves.

“What...?!?”

Beniyaru’s ward was knocked down with a single blow. She was confused by the transcendent power and tried to escape using the power of the wind elemental. However, her body was heavy as the storm was holding her down. Meanwhile, Grid’s body was infinitely lighter. “You won’t die from this much right? Let’s talk after this. Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.”

He wanted to talk...?

A ferocious attack mangled Beniyaru’s body while the other elves became rags due to the thunderbolts falling from the sky. Rain and lightning bolts fell onto the middle of the forest.

[The title ‘One who Made the Elves Surprised’ has been acquired!]

[The elves feel awe toward you.]

[The elves aren’t hostile to you.]

Consequently, Grid gave a good impression on his first time meeting another species. And...

“Strong...!” Mercedes was unable to close her mouth from outside the storm. Then she finally remembered. Her new master was the first Hero King born in hundreds of years!

Chapter 817

Blackening had been strengthened by Grid's rapid increase in demonic power during the Eternal War. After all his efforts, he managed to create Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle with the effect of the title Watched by the Gods. In addition, fighting energy had started to accumulate around him from the moment the elves appeared. Finally, there was the Weakened Great Demon Astaroth's Power.

“Urghh!”

In the heavy pouring rain and the demonic lightning, Beniyaru hesitated. Her pupils, which could be seen beyond her disheveled white hair, were trembling.

‘How did this happen?’

It felt terrible to experience it personally. One of the 12 Te... One of the noble elves of the 12 families was forced to kneel before a human...? It left a big blot on the name of ‘Te’, which meant to protect.

“Did you sell your soul to the great demons?” Beniyaru's gaze was filled with strong hostility as she glared at Grid. Her problem wasn't with Grid's demonic energy. Demonic energy wasn't unique since countless people obtained it from black magic or artifacts in the past. However, this field was different. It was an ability that raised a storm filled with lightning demonic energy. This was a force reminiscent of a monarch of hell!

“Wicked human...! You joined hands with a great demon to invade the territory of the elves! Isn't there a limit to your greed?” Beniyaru's sharp voice, which was filled with mana, penetrated through the storm. If Grid was an ordinary player, it was likely that the flow of his mana would've been disturbed and he would've suffered from all types of status conditions.

However, Grid stood firmly in place. “Why are you always

jumping to conclusions?”

The rain stopped, and the sky which could be seen through the lush leaves was now cleared up. Grid couldn't handle the large mana consumption, so he stopped using Storm Demonic Energy Field. This caused Beniyaru to misunderstand. 'Is he saving his strength? Didn't he want to kill us?'

This wasn't good news. Despair filled Beniyaru's face. "You...! You intend to sell us to slavers!"

"..."

The elves were truly narrow-minded toward humans. It was a biased negative view. Despite her strong force, Beniyaru seemed to be a coward.

Grid's eyes were filled with pity as he looked at her. Beniyaru believed her thoughts to be true, so Grid didn't blame her or feel frustrated. He actually felt pity because he was reminded of his past self.

"The reason for your twisted personality isn't just your own problem. I think you have been greatly hurt by humans."

"..." Grid's kind voice caused Beniyaru to shake. She was dumbfounded for a moment before shaking her head again, filling it with hostility toward her enemy. "Don't tell me you understand when you don't know anything about us. I don't need gentle expressions or sweet whispers. I will never be deceived, no matter how you try to fool us!"

"Ah, what a mess."

It was almost impossible to have a conversation with the elves, much like talking to a wall. This was a reality that would disappoint the many players dreaming about meeting a beautiful elf. However, Grid wasn't disappointed. After all, he hadn't come here to meet the elves.

"Well, let's not speak for too long. Listen up. I will state my

position.”

Hearing Grid’s domineering tone, Beniyaru and the other elves gulped. The tender skin of the female elves could be seen through the clothes made from woven leaves. They were afraid of the terrible sentence the human would hand down to them.

“First, I will introduce myself. I am Overgeared King Grid. I am a descendant of the legendary Pagma and the king of a human kingdom. I have not made a contract with a great demon. I used a power that I got in exchange for killing the great demon.”

“...!”

Then Grid came forward and said, “The reason I came to this place was to hunt the bear-wolves. I had no idea that this was your territory. I’m sorry if my actions frightened you.”

“...”

“I don’t want to be hostile to you in the future. As a king, I have an obligation to lead exchanges with other species in a positive direction. You can keep feeling doubtful and being wary. Just let me stay for a while to hunt.” Grid was calm after introducing himself, and he shifted his gaze to the clear sky.

It was due to the way that the elves were dressed. They were half-naked with only a few leaves covering their important parts. Grid didn’t have the courage to gaze at them from the front. He didn’t want to be mistaken as a pervert in his first encounter with the elves or for distorted rumors to spread.

His decisive yet innocent appearance caused Beniyaru and the other elves to lower their guards slightly.

“Legend... I see. That transcendent force is convincing if you are a legend. Is she a legend like you?” Beniyaru’s gaze shifted to Mercedes. Mercedes was still staring at Beniyaru because she couldn’t forgive any attacks on Grid.

Grid grabbed Mercedes’ hand to calm her down. “Yes, that’s

right. She is also a legend.”

“I see...” In the end, Beniyaru was convinced of her defeat. She had no idea about the Pagma that Grid mentioned, but she knew about Povia. Povia was a child born between a human and an elf. She was a poor child who had lived an unhappy life without belonging to any society, until she achieved transcendent power and became a legend.

“...The legend that I knew was a sublime presence. You are credible. Okay. You can’t be seen as a normal human. I will trust your words. As one of the 12 Te, I give you permission to stay here for a while. The bear-wolves are also a threat to us elves. It isn’t bad if you hunt them.”

“Thank you.”

“However, don’t go too deep into the forest. Your actions will be limited to this area.”

“Yes,” Grid answered readily.

Meanwhile, Mercedes was embarrassed. She stared at Grid’s big hand that had wrapped around hers and whispered hurriedly, “Your Majesty, this is the perfect opportunity to peek into the elves’ society and discuss future relationships with them. Are you going to miss this chance?”

The elves’ archery was even more spectacular than what was recorded in history. It was clear that the elementals were beyond their expectations. Mercedes thought that the Overgeared Kingdom and the elves should develop a good relationship. Of course, Grid was the same. “I know, but look at their attitudes. If we rush our approach now, they will just raise their vigilance. We shouldn’t be hasty. Another chance will come someday.”

This was a situation where rushing it wouldn’t end well. Grid had learned patience from numerous experiences.

“I think it is great enough just being able to stay in the elves

territory.”

“Yes, I understand.” Since the king had already decided, Mercedes didn’t sit down anymore.

“Then let’s get started.” Grid made a happy expression and pulled out his broken furnace and hammer. First of all, he would start with the repairs. However, the darkness of the forest disturbed him. It was so dark that any delicate work seemed impossible.

“The trees grow so thickly that the sun isn’t shining through well...” Grid hammered for a while before stopping and looking around the forest. All types of trees and bushes were growing wildly. The elves loved nature, so it was the aftermath of neglecting to control the trees and bushes.

“Hrmm...”

Grid had planted small maple trees, persimmon trees, and plum trees in his garden after building the penthouse. As such, he was familiar with pruning and could observe that the condition of the forest wasn’t that great.

He pointed to a giant tree in front of him where the surface was torn and said, “If you really care about the trees, you should prune them. The trees that grow indiscriminately have become intertwined with each other and are deformed. No sunlight can pass through, so the moss growing near the roots are deprived of nutrients, making them vulnerable to pests and diseases.”

“...?” Beniyaru and the elves were embarrassed as Grid started preaching to them. They couldn’t understand Grid’s words properly.

“Pruning? Pests? What are you saying?”

“A helping hand is needed to make the forest healthier.”

“What type of sophistry is this? Nature is perfect when it exists as it is.”

“Don’t pretend to know human subjects!”

There was a backlash from the elves. However, Beniyaru was different. She could see the glimpse of an old friend in Grid.

‘He is saying the same thing as Povia...’

Povia had claimed to have learned human knowledge from her human parent, yet the elves had laughed at her. Many people had ridiculed the pathetic half-breed, and Beniyaru had been one of them. She waved her hand, thinking she should believe in Grid. This was atonement for Povia. So, Beniyaru decided to make a request. “You... Overgeared King Grid.”

“...?”

“Can I hand over management of the forest to you?”

“Eh?” Grid was panicked over the sudden proposal.

Beniyaru bowed to him. “I think there is enough evidence for your argument. I would like to ask you to do the pruning.”

“...!!”

One of the elves, who were famous for their pride, was bowing down to a human while making a request...? Moreover, this was an elf who had tried to harm him just a little while ago! Mercedes’ eyes widened as she stared at Grid, impressed by his greatness. ‘His Majesty intended all of this!’

Mercedes was ignorant about plants and didn’t know anything about this situation, but it was obvious that Grid was the one driving this situation. Grid started sweating as Mercedes’ shining gaze focused on him. ‘No, what...’

[Tend to the Elven Forest]

[Difficulty: A

Beniyaru, one of the 12 guardians who defend the elves, has a request for you.

She wants you to make this forest beautiful!

Quest Clear Conditions: Prune 2,000 trees (0/2000)

Quest Clear Reward: Affinity with the entire elf species will increase by 20. Leaves of the World Tree (20), Fruits of the World Tree (5).

Quest Failure: Your relationship with the elves will become hostile.]

“...I’m not a gardener.”

Yes, Grid was a blacksmith. So, why did he receive quest meant for a gardener? Grid had come here for equipment and to level up. He couldn’t afford to waste time pruning 2,000 tree branches.

‘How hard will it be to strike the trees?’

This quest should be rejected! Grid wanted to shout out loud.

However, the quest reward was the problem. The leaf of the world tree that he had given to Sticks was a panacea. Grid was intensely curious about what effect the fruit of the world tree would have, since it seemed more precious. Additionally, the increased affinity with the elves was also crucial.

‘Why...?’

Grid didn’t accept or refuse the quest. It was because one person passed through his mind.

‘Piaro!’

He was a legendary farmer who knew crops! Maybe Piaro had also specialized in the management of other plants, including trees? Grid thought of this and immediately used Knights Summoning. The legendary farmer and the elves—this would be the first meeting between people who cherished nature.

Had Piaro thought his king was in danger? Piaro had felt anxious and immediately responded to the summoning.

“Elves...” He faced the elves while holding a hand plow and sickle in his hand. The elves sniffed him, and their faces became flushed.

“A wonderful man...”

“...”

The smell of soil around Piaro’s body struck the elves’ emotions. It was fortunate for Grid. “Okay. From now on, I will make armor while Mercedes will eat honey. Meanwhile, Piaro will prune the branches with the elves.”

Grid’s method of handling things wasn’t wrong. In the first place, subordinates were meant to be used. However, Grid’s subordinates were a legendary farmer and legendary knight...

Chapter 818

The branches, which were longer than humans, were as threatening as sharp blades, while the lush and overgrown foliage interfered with one's vision. The giant trees eagerly reached for the sky. Was there anyone who wouldn't feel reverence when standing before this scene? They would feel so overwhelmed that they couldn't breathe.

However, Piaro was a legend. Nature was familiar to him as he immersed himself in the fields. The clean air and nature stirred up his mind and body.

"I'll clean you up!!" Piaro yelled as he moved like a flying squirrel between the trees. Every time Belial's sickle moved through the air, the branches of the giant trees fell to the ground. It took less than 10 minutes for a giant tree to be trimmed neatly.

Grid's expectations were met. The legendary farmer had a high understanding of plants as a whole, giving him spectacular pruning skills. His hands gave life to the trees.

[Your subordinate, Piaro, has completed the pruning. (1/2,000)]

"Well done!"

Ttang! Ttang! Grid started hammering a metal plate on top of the hole in the portable furnace. It was a move that was more reminiscent of a drunk soldier dancing.

'Amazing!'

In the case of quests that required hunting a certain number of monsters, those killed by his party members who accepted the quest and his pets would also count. So, Grid had thought about it. Why did he need to do the pruning himself? Couldn't he get his pets or subordinates to clear the quest for him?

His idea was reasonable and actually came true. Thanks to the legendary farmer, Grid was able to proceed with the pruning quest

much faster than if he did it on his own.

“Cool...”

“I didn’t realize there could be a human who is so close to nature and understands nature better than us.”

“Look at how he has become one with nature. He is a few times better than us elves. If I were to have a baby, I would like to have that man’s children.”

It seemed there had come a day when the noble elves would fall in love with a mere human. The female elves now realized why the species called half-elves existed. Their eyes were wet as they watched Piaro prune a tree. Mercedes felt a strange pride. ‘This is the attraction of a true hero that transcends even species. Piaro is truly amazing.’

He was indeed the person she admired. Mercedes dipped a finger into the honey and licked it. She seemed to be the most leisurely one out of Grid’s group. During a time when she should be protecting her king, she was actually eating honey? Anyone who didn’t know the situation would misunderstand Mercedes if they saw this scene. However, Mercedes had her own troubles.

‘I have to eat sparingly.’

The Media Mountain honey—this expensive honey that Grid was reluctant to eat was extremely fragrant and sweet compared to the premium honey Mercedes had tasted previously. It was so fresh that she could keep eating without getting tired of it. This honey was so delicious that the legendary knight Mercedes felt a desire to eat it indefinitely. Yes, it was hard to resist the honey which had a demon-like temptation.

Lick...

She wanted to eat it all at once! Mercedes looked more beautiful than usual as she barely suppressed this intense desire, taking a little bit of honey with her fingertips and bringing it to her tongue.

Grid stared at her blankly while hammering and realized, ‘Why haven’t I seen a bear-wolf yet?’

It had been 20 minutes since Mercedes first started eating the honey. 100ml of honey cost a huge 50 gold. It meant that 60,000 won was wasted on the uselessly expensive honey.

‘Am I going to waste money in vain?’

Ttang! Ttang! Grid kept hammering as his nervousness reached the peak.

Lick.

“Hah... Hah... Y-Your Majesty. It is difficult to endure any longer.” The look in Mercedes’ eyes changed. She started breathing hard, and more and more honey began to cover her fingers.

[Mercedes has entered the ‘intoxicated’ state.]

“What?”

It couldn’t be resisted even with a legend’s passive resistance. This was the terrifying power of expensive honey!

“N-No...! My money...!” Grid screamed as 60,000 won worth of honey was about to enter Mercedes’ stomach at once.

Did his desperate cry reach the heavens?

Kwaaaaah!

Finally, a bear-wolf that Grid had been waiting for so long showed up.

[The bear-wolf is enticed by the sweet scent!]

[The atrocious cry incites fear in all those who hear it!]

[You have resisted.]

[The cry of an atrocious beast has filled the ears of those scattered throughout the forest. If you can’t hunt the bear-wolf within five minutes, a new bear-wolf will pop up! Be careful! The bear-wolves

have excellent collective hunting ability and will become stronger as their numbers increase!]

“Hah!” A smile appeared on Grid’s face as he sighed with relief. As soon as an enemy appeared, Mercedes recovered from the intoxicated state. She licked the honey on her hand without swallowing all of it and pulled out a shield with her other hand. The bear-wolf leaped with a wolf’s nimble body and struck Mercedes with a big paw that was reminiscent of a bear. Mercedes blocked it with a shield and took two steps back.

Grid, Mercedes, and Piaro, who was pruning the trees, were all surprised.

‘Isn’t this strength equivalent to an ogre’s?’

At this point, it was difficult to classify the bear-wolf as a normal monster. If Grid couldn’t hunt the bear-wolf within five minutes, a new bear-wolf would pop up. Grid had been glad about being able to save the honey by hunting the bear-wolves slowly, but now it wasn’t a positive message.

“The bear-wolves are also a threat to the elves!” Beniyaru’s shout rang out. She felt a great affinity toward Piaro and was concerned about Grid’s party.

It was an urgent atmosphere. Grid was a bit embarrassed as he shouted the name of the skill, “C-Can you Become the King of the Dead?”

Clack! Clack clack!

Two skeletons rose from the ground. They were Overgeared Skeletons One and Two.

“Undead!”

The bear-wolf didn’t respond to the skeletons, but the elves were different. The elves, who adored nature, disliked the undead that went against the providence of nature. As such, they aimed their bows at the Overgeared Skeletons reflexively.

“These children aren’t bad undead, they are good undead,” Piaro explained as he jumped down from a tree. There was no basis for his argument. Undead were undead. What was a good undead and bad undead? It wasn’t logical at all. Yet the elves were persuaded to believe it. Words from those they respected were the most powerful thing in the world.

What would happen if an ugly man talked to a beautiful school junior? He could be called a molester. Then what if a handsome man was nice to the junior? They were likely to directly become a couple. It was similar to this.

“I see. They are good undead!”

“I looked again, and their appearance is really good!”

Haha, hoho! Piaro and the elves formed a cheerful atmosphere. Piaro was surrounded by a flower field, and this was a pleasant feeling for any man. Moreover, the elves had a much milder attitude than usual.

‘Is he going to marry an elf?’

There had already been the precedent with Povia. Marriage between humans and elves wasn’t impossible. It was good to see the affinity the elves had toward Piaro due to their common love of nature. Grid began to imagine it. If Piaro married the elves, an alliance between the elves and the Overgeared Kingdom would be born...

“No, now isn’t the time to be thinking about this.”

Mercedes’ small shield cracked as she defended against the bear-wolf’s paws. After leaving the empire, the equipment Mercedes used was terrible as they were what she had used during the days when Piaro was a captain. The level of the sword, shield, armor, boots, and gloves she used were all in the 200s. It was a level that would cause any poor man in the army to tremble.

“Kyaaak!” Randy was summoned after the Overgeared Skeletons.

He fought the bear-wolf and was blown back. The good news was that the Overgeared Skeletons were still safe. The bear-wolves ignored them because their low-level attacks couldn't penetrate the bear-wolf's leather at all. It didn't care even when it was attacked by the skeletons.

In fact, the damage that the Overgeared Skeletons dealt to the bear-wolf was fixed at 1 damage. Not only did the bear-wolf's defense power exceed the attack power of the Overgeared Skeletons, the gap between their levels was overwhelmingly great.

As such, Mercedes' role became even more important. It would take at least 20 minutes to accumulate damage on the bear-wolf to the extent that the Overgeared Skeletons gained experience points. In the meantime, Mercedes had to steadily endure the bear-wolf's attacks as well as avoid the attacks of the new bear-wolves that appeared.

However, was that even possible? Mercedes' shield was about to break. It would be too risky for her to fight with just her swords if her shield broke. Grid couldn't let that happen and opened his inventory. The item he took out was the World Crushing Sword of the Noble White Tiger that he had designed with Sword Saint Kraugel.

“Mercedes!”

The usage condition of the White Tiger Sword was that the user had to be one of the top three rankers in each class capable of using a sword-type weapon. Could Mercedes meet this condition? Of course, Grid thought she could meet it. She was a legendary knight and would naturally be judged as the top ranker of her class.

It was as he expected. Mercedes caught the sword Grid threw over to her. She blocked the bear-wolf's paw with her shield without looking, while she examined the White Tiger Sword. Then Mercedes got goosebumps. It was the aftermath of examining the White Tiger Sword with her insightful eyes. The small shield could

no longer endure the impact of the bear-wolf's paw and cracked, splitting apart completely.

Kwaaaaah! The bear-wolf roared as it swung its sharp claws. However, its claws couldn't reach Mercedes' face. Instead, the White Tiger Sword struck the bear-wolf's abdomen. Simultaneously, a stone pillar rose and hit the bear-wolf's big body. The pillar was several hundred kilograms heavy and caused the bear-wolf's body to fly up five meters.

“Unbelievable...!” Mercedes was amazed by the power of the divine sword which couldn't be seen even in legends. Grid's voice entered her ears, “I congratulate you on becoming a legendary overgeared knight, Mercedes.”

A product of the worst naming sense, which would've caused someone else to cry, made a stir in Mercedes' heart.

‘Legendary overgeared knight...’

She was an overgeared knight of the Overgeared King. Mercedes felt a strong sense of belonging, and her loyalty to Grid increased even further. She was now a real member of the Overgeared Kingdom.

Chapter 819

The bear-wolves were gray wolves with a lot of fur, and they had a body length of around three meters. The first impression one would have of a bear-wolf was that it was a very threatening ‘big wolf’. However, people would soon realize this was a big misunderstanding after seeing its thick paws. The bear-wolf wasn’t just about size. The destructive power of its paws was more like that of a bear.

The bear-wolf was struck by the White Tiger Sword’s pillar and flew up five meters. At first, it was confused by the power and instinctually rotated into a position to gain acceleration. This was a near explosive move. The bear-wolf borrowed the power of gravity, and its hundreds of kilograms fell toward Mercedes’ face. It was an instant cast skill that couldn’t be avoided by humans or even elves.

However, Mercedes avoided it with relative ease. Her insight and experiences allowed her to read the attack easily. Therefore, she narrowly avoided the bear-wolf’s linked skills.

“...!”

As Mercedes avoided it, the bear-wolf used the wolf’s agility to place a paw on the ground and did a wheel spin. The perfect conversion of the bear-wolf’s missed attack aimed at the defenseless Mercedes. Mercedes sensed the attack late, so she gave up on counter-attacking and instead secured a safe distance away from the bear-wolf.

Grrrr...

Perhaps it was to gain leverage to leap forward...? The bear-wolf bent forward with its chest close to the ground.

‘I think it will spin.

Mercedes recalled the bear-wolf’s body structure and agility,

using it to predict the power of the next attack. She held the White Tiger Sword in one hand and another sword in the other. This was the moment when the legendary knight went all out against a monster.

Ttang! Ttang! Grid couldn't hide his embarrassment as he almost finished repairing the portable furnace.

“What type of monster is that?”

Grid imagined himself in the situation that Mercedes had just been in. He might've been able to avoid the first strike, but he likely wouldn't have been able to escape the pivoted paw that followed immediately afterward and would be thrown into the air. Grid would've ended up being battered.

‘Kraugel wasn't exaggerating.’

Sword Saint Kraugel had called the bear-wolf ‘strong’ and said that they wouldn't be easy to hunt. How could a field mob be a threat? Grid had jokingly thought this at the time. However, he now realized it was true. If Grid hadn't brought Mercedes here, he wouldn't have been able to raise the level of his Overgeared Skeletons alone. He wouldn't be able to control the Overgeared Skeletons while hunting the bear-wolves at the same time.

Beniyaru's admiring murmur entered his ears, “Going up against an ancient species...”

“Ancient species?”

“I am referring to beasts or organisms that have been present since the beginning of the world tree's existence. The bear-wolves are one of them. The damage they suffered during the elves' thousands of years of history hasn't been severe, but for a human to be facing them...”

One person was dealing with the bear-wolf alone. She even seemed to have room to breathe.

‘Truly a legend...’ Beniyaru was reminded of the half-elf Povia,

the legendary archer. Then Beniyaru returned to her senses when she heard the bear-wolf's piercing scream. The bear-wolf had started spinning like a spinning top. It had expected to mangle Mercedes with its sharp claws, only for the situation to reverse. As its front paws were pierced by Mercedes' twin swords, the bear-wolf howled. The White Tiger Sword's rapidly rising weight pushed down on the bear-wolf's heavy body.

[There will be a one-second penalty in the recovery of the White Tiger Sword.]

This was the moment when the fatal disadvantage of the White Tiger was revealed. Mercedes couldn't retrieve the White Tiger Sword that was pressing on the bear-wolf. At this moment...

"Haaap!" Mercedes' two swords shone. She swung the other sword in her hand, leaving the White Tiger Sword in the bear-wolf. Then just as she was about to deal the finishing blow, she stopped. Mercedes was reminded of her mission. Her role was to attract the bear-wolf's attention, not hunt it. The finishing blow...

Clack! Clack clack!

That was for Randy and the Overgeared Skeletons to do. They unleashed an onslaught on the bear-wolf but the damage naturally wasn't high. The Overgeared Skeletons only decreased the bear-wolf's health by one, while Randy turned into Grid but could only deal damage in the thousands.

The bear-wolf jumped up, not even seeing the Overgeared Skeletons and Randy who were sticking close to it. It only rushed at Mercedes. This was like watching a bullfighter and a bull. As requested by Grid, Mercedes' drew the wolf's aggro.

Ttang! Ttang! The repair of the portable furnace was coming to an end. Grid determined that the bear-wolf didn't have much health left and began shouting orders, "Okay! Go!"

He was looking forward to the Overgeared Skeletons and Randy

getting experience. In particular, he wondered what would happen once the Overgeared Skeletons reached level 100. Would their stats awaken like players? Additionally, would there be the concept of a promotion like how ordinary skeletons might become skeleton warriors or magicians? Grid had extremely high expectations for the Overgeared Skeletons.

There was a loud noise as forest trees broke and collapsed. At first, it was hundreds of meters away. Then it got closer and closer. A giant tree behind Mercedes fell down, and a new bear-wolf appeared. It pushed through all the trees in its way with extremely developed shoulder muscles and swung its paws at Mercedes.

Only five minutes had passed since the first bear-wolf appeared. It was okay up to here. Mercedes handled the first and second bear-wolves without much difficulty. She grabbed the aggro with constant damage, allowing the Overgeared Skeletons and Randy to concentrate on hunting. However, the situation became somewhat urgent after the third bear-wolf appeared.

“Ugh...!”

The three bear-wolves acted together like systematically trained soldiers. They attacked Mercedes relentlessly from every direction, and she was wounded for the first time. The bear-wolves became stronger every time their number increased. Still, Grid wasn't worried. He believed in the legendary knight.

“White Tiger's Attitude.” Mercedes used the skill of the White Tiger Sword at 100%.

[White Tiger's Attitude]

[Acquires the attitude of the White Tiger.]

Attack power and movement are reduced by 80% and defense is increased by 198%.

Skill Mana Cost: 17 per second.

Skill Cooldown Time: 30 minutes.]

The now more durable Mercedes endured the pincer attacks of the three bear-wolves. Her swordsmanship was optimized for defense. Grid finally finished repairing the portable furnace and put the white phosphorus wood inside. Then the temperature rose.

[You have defeated a bear-wolf.]

It happened when the fourth bear-wolf appeared. In other words, the first bear-wolf turned to grey 20 minutes after it appeared. The rewards far exceeded Grid's expectations.

[The level of Overgeared Skeleton One has risen!]

[The level of Overgeared Skeleton One has risen...]

[The level of Overgeared Skeleton One...]

[The level of Overgeared Skeleton One...]

.....

.....

[The level of Overgeared Skeleton Two has risen!]

[The level of Overgeared Skeleton Two has risen...]

[The level of Overgeared Skeleton Two...]

[The level of Overgeared...]

.....

.....

[Doppelganger Randy's level has risen!]

[Doppelganger Randy's level has risen...]

.....

The Overgeared Skeletons gained a huge 14 levels while Randy gained three levels! Was that all?

[39,000,100 experience has been acquired.]

As the master of Randy and the Overgeared Skeletons, Grid also

gained experience. It was only a fraction of the experience, but it was still a considerable amount.

‘It is worth the long hunt.’

This was as expected of the hunting ground Kraugel recommended. Grid commanded Mercedes, “Keep the number of bear-wolves to two!”

“Yes!”

In any case, the bear-wolves constantly appeared every five minutes. There was no need to play with three or more bear-wolves at the same time. Mercedes received Grid’s order and showed her power for the first time. The ground around Mercedes shook due to White Tiger’s Cry.

[White Tiger’s Cry Lv. 1]

[Creates an earthquake with a radius of 5 meters.

All objects within range are subjected to a ‘loss of balance’ status and a 13% reduction in defense, evasion, and accuracy. If the target is using a spell or skill, casting is forcibly canceled.

Mana Consumption: 1,500

Skill Cooldown Time: 10 minutes.]

The bear-wolves stumbled! They wanted to resist the loss of balance with their innate athleticism, but Mercedes didn’t miss this gap. A storm of sword energy swallowed up the bear-wolves.

Ttang! Ttang!

Grid watched Mercedes’ movements. He intended to design an armor and shield optimized for her. However, there was something he had to make sure of first.

“Mercedes!”

“Yes!”

“Collect all the loot from the bear-wolves and give them to me

later!”

“Yes!”

The bear-wolves’ cries kept echoing through the forest as the hunt continued. Grid’s experience increased by 0.5% and the Overgeared Skeletons reached level 100 even though Grid wasn’t involved in hunting at all! Then...

[Overgeared Skeletons One and Two have received their first stats awakening!]

The Overgeared Skeletons’ stats were awakened at level 100, just like the players’. Furthermore...

[Overgeared Skeletons One and Two can be upgraded. Please select the desired class.]

Upgrades were also available. Grid’s expectations for the Overgeared Skeletons were perfectly met. What would be the secondary classes of the plain skeletons? Grid’s heart thumped as he looked excitedly at the class list rising in front of him.

Clack! Clack clack!

Were they aware of their own growth? Overgeared Skeletons One and Two were also excited. They held hands with each other and danced around.

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[Overgeared Skeletons One and Two can be upgraded. Please select the desired class.]

The Overgeared Skeletons had reached level 100! Grid stopped for a moment after identifying that they could be upgraded. His extremely excited heart burned much hotter than his skin, which had been heated by the white phosphorus wood.

‘Can they become a skeleton warrior or mage?’

Skeleton -> skeleton warrior -> skeleton knight -> death knight, dark knight, or reaper.

Or skeleton-> skeleton mage-> skeleton general -> lich.

These were the evolution patterns of ordinary undead. Grid’s idea that a skeleton warrior and skeleton mage would appear in the Overgeared Skeletons’ upgrade list was plausible.

“Huhuhu...” A wide smile appeared on Grid’s face as he thought about Overgeared Skeleton One being reborn as a death knight and Overgeared Skeleton Two being born as a lich. Extremely excited, he called Overgeared Skeletons One and Two to him.

Clack! Clack clack!

They were skeletons with a temperament and were like dogs or cats that followed people well. Clacking as they moved to follow Grid’s call, the puppies came running.

“Now, let’s see.” Grid faced the Overgeared Skeletons with a warm expression and touched the golden exclamation marks above their heads.

[Possible class list for the Overgeared Skeletons One and Two.]

The list of classes he could choose from popped up. It was a list that would trample Grid’s expectations.

[Possible Class List for Overgeared Skeleton One]

- [1. Skeleton Miner
- 2. Skeleton Dancer
- 3. Skeleton Destroyer]

[Possible Class List for Overgeared Skeleton Two]

- [1. Skeleton Miner
- 2. Skeleton Dancer
- 3. Skeleton Restorer.]

“No, isn’t this crazy?”

Where were the skeleton warrior and the mage? What were miner and dancer? Grid doubted his eyes and started rubbing them. However, the list of possible classes for the Overgeared Skeletons didn’t change. It wasn’t an illusion.

“Why does this always happen to me...?”

No, it didn’t make sense. The undead... Why was there a miner and dance on their list of advancement classes?

“This is a joke...!” Grid’s entire body shook and he gritted his teeth as his mind entered a state of extreme anger. However, it was only for a moment. Grid checked up on Mercedes and Randy, who were dealing with the bear-wolves alone after the Overgeared Skeletons came over to him. Mercedes was worried that the Overgeared Skeletons wouldn’t get enough experience, so she only defended. This made Grid concerned about her stamina, and he regained his calm.

‘Calm down.’ Grid took deep breaths and looked at the class information of the Overgeared Skeletons.

[Skeleton Miner]

[The Overgeared Skeletons were forced into mining by their master and have the qualities of a miner. They are likely to be relatively good miners.]

[Skeleton Dancer]

[The Overgeared Skeletons dance every time the wind blows and loves dancing. It is still weak but they have the quality of a dancer.

“...There is a reason for everything.”

Grid found out why miner and dancer were included in the class list and regretted the past. If only he hadn't made the Overgeared Skeletons mine... If only he hadn't forced the Overgeared Skeletons to be blown by the wind, making them dance...

‘...No, it wouldn't have changed anything.’

In the end, Grid decided for the unique classes of the Overgeared Skeletons to be destroyer and restorer. Based on their names, they seemed to be unusual classes.

‘They might be better than ordinary classes like warrior or mage...!’ Grid gulped.

Anticipation once again filled the depths of his heart.

[Skeleton Destroyer]

[Overgeared Skeleton One has a history of destroying Overgeared Skeleton Two, giving it the ability to deal deadly wounds to the undead.

Even a death knight should be vigilant in front of the skeleton destroyer.]

“...”

[Skeleton Restorer]

[Overgeared Skeleton Two has been destroyed several times by Overgeared Skeleton One, using its high intelligence to learn a technique to quickly restore broken bones using mana.

It can be seen as a skeleton healer.

The presence of the skeleton restorer will greatly enhance the duration of skeleton-based undead.]

“...” Grid closed his eyes and several scenes came to mind. One was of Overgeared Skeleton One hitting Overgeared Skeleton Two in the back. Unable to deal with Overgeared Skeleton One’s force, Overgeared Skeleton Two had been blown back...

Why...

“Why did I let them act like this...?”

That’s right. The destroyer and restorer were also unique classes of the Overgeared Skeletons. They were manifested based on the Overgeared Skeletons’ behavioral patterns. Grid got goosebumps.

‘How high is the degree of freedom?’

The classes were divided based on the growth environment? Wasn’t there more freedom than what was given to players?

‘These guys are really...’

They were undoubtedly a super-named type of undead. Grid was feeling convinced of this while Mercedes and Randy continued battling the bear-wolves.

Mercedes endured the pincer attacks of three bear-wolves with White Tiger’s Attitude, while Randy was assisted by the God Hands. As she waited for the Overgeared Skeletons to join the battle again, Mercedes’ stamina was reduced to a level that couldn’t be ignored. Having come out together when Randy was summoned, Noe now asked Grid a question, “Master, should I help?”

Grid shook his head. “No. You can just rest.”

Noe had ingested a large amount of energy from the thunder stone during the Astaroth raid and evolved, showing a perfect strength. So, it wasn’t urgent to level him up when he could hunt at any time. Noe could level up any time if he wanted. The two things Grid were aiming for in this battle were the growth of the Overgeared Skeletons and Randy, and watching Mercedes fight in order to design a suitable armor for her. As such, there was no

reason for Noe to act.

“Change class.”

Grid stroked Noe’s soft fur and decided on the Overgeared Skeletons’ classes. Overgeared Skeleton One would be a destroyer and Overgeared Skeleton Two a restorer! He had to be careful not to click on miner or dancer by mistake!

Flash!

Overgeared Skeletons One and Two were surrounded by a bright light, and numerous notification windows popped up.

[Overgeared Skeleton One has been converted to a skeleton destroyer.]

[The class compensation effect will increase Overgeared Skeleton One’s strength and stamina by 10.]

[Overgeared Skeleton One has acquired the skill ‘Bone Cracking’.]

[Bone Cracking Lv. 1]

[There is a low probability of destroying materials made of bone (undead, items, structures, etc.).]

Resources Consumed: None.

Skill Cooldown Time: 20 seconds]

[Overgeared Skeleton Two has been converted to a skeleton restorer.]

[The class compensation effect will increase Overgeared Skeleton Two’s intelligence and stamina by 10.]

[Overgeared Skeleton Two has acquired the skill ‘Bone Sticking’.]

[Bone Sticking Lv. 1]

[Restores 20% of a skeleton-based undead’s health. The damaged part of the target will be restored.]

Skill Resources Consumed: 20

Skill Cooldown Time: 30 seconds]

“...”

It was kind of funny. A skeleton that cracked bones and a skeleton that healed bones...

‘If this continues, will Overgeared Skeleton One keep destroying while Overgeared Skeleton Two becomes capable of using wide-area heals?’

The future Grid would realize how poor his imagination was on this day. However, that was a story for when the Overgeared Skeletons have their second advancement classes.

Kyak kyak! Kyak!!

“...!” Grid was startled. After changing classes, the Overgeared Skeletons developed a capability to make sounds. Previously, they just moved their jaws, but they could now make kyak kyak laughs.

“Sigh, it is amazing.”

This wasn’t a horror movie. How were these guys cute? Grid was still suspicious of Mercedes’ taste and gave an order.

“Move! Level up!”

Kyak kyak! Kyak!

Kyak kyak kyak!

They were really excited. Overgeared Skeletons One and Two rushed toward the bear-wolves and stabbed. Then something amazing happened.

[Overgeared Skeleton One has inflicted 4 damage to the bear-wolf.]

[Overgeared Skeleton Two has inflicted 2 damage to the bear-wolf.]

The Overgeared Skeletons’ damage was several times greater than before!

‘This is the power of the stats awakening...!’

Were damages of 2 and 4 that surprising? Of course, it was. The bear-wolves were presumed to be at least level 400, whereas the Overgeared Skeletons had just achieved level 100. The fact that the huge 300-level difference was slightly overcome suggested one thing.

‘Normal monsters don’t have the concept of stats awakening.’

Therefore, most monsters were weak compared to their level. The gap between named-grade monsters and ordinary monsters was almost certain to widen as the level increased. Then what about the Overgeared Skeletons, who were super-named monsters? Their level value was astronomical. At level 300 and 400, the Overgeared Skeletons were likely to be more destructive than boss monsters. That possibility was proven right now.

[Overgeared Skeleton One has used the skill ‘Bone Cracking’.]

“...!?!?!” Grid’s eyes widened. Overgeared Skeleton One stabbed his blade deep inside the bear-wolf facing Mercedes. The skill was used as soon as it detected that its blade hit the bear-wolf’s bone.

The aftermath...

[Overgeared Skeleton One has inflicted 10,500 damage to the bear-wolf!]

[The bones of the bear-wolf’s lower body have been broken, and the bear-wolf is now permanently paralyzed! The bear-wolf’s stats will drop by 20%!]

The bear-wolf’s aggro headed toward the Overgeared Skeletons for the first time. The paw of the wounded bear-wolf hit the head of Overgeared Skeleton One. However, it was wishful thinking.

Kik! Kikikik! This was because Overgeared Skeleton Two laughed at Overgeared Skeleton One before using Bone Sticking.

Kyak kyak! Kya kya kyak! Confirming that its disappeared head

was restored, Overgeared Skeleton One laughed. Then its hand hit Overgeared Skeleton Two, and Overgeared Skeleton Two's head flew off. Overgeared Skeleton Two was forced to remain silent until the cooldown of Bone Sticking ended.

“...” Grid was also silent. He couldn't open his mouth as he stared at the Overgeared Skeletons with affection. Even the sound of the Overgeared Skeletons laughing started to feel lovely.

Chapter 821

The bones were the last bastion of an animal. The skin might be easily damaged by sharpness, but the bones were resistant. However, Overgeared Skeleton One destroyed the bone itself. It was a reaper.

‘I need to make a rapier-type weapon suitable for it!’

Grid’s eyes were full of affection as he looked at Overgeared Skeleton One, who disabled the bear-wolf that even threatened the elves. The affection Grid displayed was enough to make Noe feel jealous.

“Bah, I don’t like skeletons. They can’t compare to the best demonic beast of hell.”

“Of course.”

After all, his affection for Noe was already close to infinity! Grid stroked Noe’s fur while trying hard to calm his heart.

‘Permanent debuffs...!’

The system clearly said so. Overgeared Skeleton One paralyzed the bear-wolf by destroying the bones of its lower body. The reason was obvious. How could it move with broken bones?

‘This is on the level of a scam.’

Of course, recovery wasn’t impossible. It was a condition that could be restored immediately with a skill like Bone Sticking. However, how many monsters would have a skill like that? Boss monsters could restore broken bones when recovering, but regular monsters couldn’t escape the Overgeared Skeletons. The players were also similar.

‘Broken bone’ wasn’t a common condition, so the number of players who could endure their bones breaking was surprisingly small. Given that damaged bones cost 100 gold to restore, the use

of Bone Cracking alone could cause serious damage.

‘Well... the heals of a priest can restore it. So, this isn’t a problem to worry about.’

Did Grid need help from Overgeared Skeleton One to deal with ordinary monsters and players? No, Grid alone could handle them. Overgeared Skeleton One was only worthy when going against a more transcendent being. For example...

‘Agnus!’ Grid thought of the mad dog. Agnus, Baal’s Contractor, was a sun-grade player who pretended to be the king of the living and the dead, and had a large number of liches and death knights. Like Grid, Agnus far transcended the category of a player and was one of the few opponents who could cause Grid to tense up. Grid had felt both regret and relief when he hadn’t met Agnus while hunting Immortal in the empire. Now, he would no longer feel any fear as long as he had Overgeared Skeleton One!

‘Agnus, where are you hiding now?’ Grid’s anger toward Agnus, the head of Immortal and the source of Khan’s death, revived again. The eternal war between Grid and Immortal had yet to end.

The Overgeared Skeletons continued hunting the bear-wolves. Of course, the speed of the hunt wasn’t very different from before. Overgeared Skeleton One’s Bone Cracking skill only had a low chance of activating. So, it was very rare for the Overgeared Skeletons to deal a fatal blow to the bear-wolves.

However, Grid wasn’t worried. He had no doubt that the Overgeared Skeletons’ level and skill levels would rise quickly with Mercedes as a bus.

‘I have to give a reward to the bus driver.’

Before he knew it, the portable furnace reached the temperature he wanted. What material should he make Mercedes’ armor out of...? Fortunately, there was no need for Grid to fret about that as he had the items he acquired when he went to support Valhalla!

[Red Knights' Red Armor]

[Rating: Unique

Durability: 599/599 Defense: 501

* Strength increased by 20%.

* Two of the wearer's highest stats will increase by 10%. If strength or intelligence increases at this time, there will be 200 additional attack power. Physical defense will increase by 200. An increase in agility will raise accuracy and evasion by 10%.

* Increases magic resistance in proportion to the wearer's intelligence.

* The effect of the wearer's highest level skill will increase by 20%.

* The cooldown of the wearer's two lowest level skills will decrease by 10%.

* Durability and defense will slightly increase when the wearer's level increases. However, this number is reset when the wearer changes.

* Unlocks a unique characteristic every time the level increases by 100. This characteristic is permanently maintained.

A heavy armor made of black mithril filled with the red energy of the Saharan emperor, ogre bones and rosar tin.

It increases the armor and strength of the wearer, as well as enhancing their unique ability.

As an armor given to the Red Knights ranging from 10-30, it is a treasure worthy of stimulating the Red Knights.

Weight: 1,000

Conditions of Use: A Red Knight.]

[Lorex's Red Armor]

[Rating: Legendary

Durability: 599/599 Defense: 501

- * Strength increased by 20%.

- * Two of the wearer's highest stats will increase by 10%. If strength or intelligence increases at this time, there will be 200 additional attack power. Physical defense will increase by 200. An increase in agility will raise accuracy and evasion by 10%.

- * Increases magic resistance in proportion to the wearer's intelligence.

- * The effect of the wearer's highest level skill will increase by 20%.

- * The cooldown of the wearer's two lowest level skills will decrease by 10%.

- * The power of all wide-range skills is increased by 20%.

- * When a large weapon is equipped, attack power will increase by 10% and attack speed will increase by 5%.

- * Durability and defense will slightly increase when the wearer's level increases. However, this number is reset when the wearer changes.

- * Unlocks a unique characteristic every time the level increases by 100. This characteristic is permanently maintained.

Red armor that has grown with Third Knight Lorex.

After Lorex's death, the growth figures for the durability and defense were reset. However, the other unique characteristics remain. The new Red Knight who inherits this armor will become stronger over time.

Weight: 1,000

Conditions of Use: A Red Knight.]

[Lorex's Large Axe]

[Durability: 1,000/1,000

Attack Power: 1,200~1,500

* 20% drop in attack speed.

* When attacking more than 10 enemies at once, weapon damage will increase by 3% for 10 seconds. This effect will accumulate up to 30%, and the duration is reset whenever a damage boost occurs.

* Every time more than 10 enemies are attacked at once, 5,000 health will be recovered.

A special axe made out of rosar tin, produced for Lorex due to his distinguished military service.

The more enemies the wielder faces, the more powerful they become.

Weight: 5,900

Conditions of Use: Lorex]

This was the list of items he had gotten from slaughtering Lorex and the Red Knights back when he became the Basic Attack King.

Grid's knowledge of these items were 100% due to constantly disassembling, assembling, and repairing them. However, he hadn't used them directly. He might be able to exert a high level of attack power if he used the armor, but its inherent defense was too low. Grid didn't regret this since he aimed for greater attack power with his swords. He would prefer the guaranteed high defense of Triple Layers over the red armor.

Mercedes was in a different position. As a legendary knight, she received a correction effect when wearing heavy armor. Rather than make something like Triple Layers which was classified as chain mail, it was better to boost her potential with the red armor.

‘Moreover, Mercedes is familiar with the red armor since she has been using it until now.’

This was truly a big issue. Wouldn't Mercedes' red armor clearly be better than Lorex's red armor? It would've been perfect if she

hadn't returned it to the empire...

'I don't know if the emperor is generous or stingy. If he is going to give her to me, he should give everything.' Grid thought too much!

He planned to recreate the red armor and axe all in one order. The higher the content of the ore, the higher the durability and defense of the armor would be. Of course, there was the problem of the increased weight. However, considering Mercedes' fighting method, it should be okay.

'Mercedes' battle style is similar to mine.'

Rather than avoiding the target's attack, she defended and fought back. Mercedes relied on weight for her sword attacks instead of speed. As such, Grid decided that Mercedes' armor should be in a form that could protect all of her without any gaps, even if her agility was somewhat limited.

The Overgeared King—a man who had skills that even the gods admired—started concentrating deeply.

The two sets of red armor and the large axe had already melted in the blast furnace.

"Let's start the production."

Inside the elven forest that humans hadn't entered for hundreds of years: Kyak kyak! Skeletons were laughing as the cries of bear-wolves were continuing unabated...

"Vaintz' Swordsmanship 1st style!" The legendary knight was fighting...

"Hahaha! The air is clear!!" The legendary farmer was pruning branches...

Ttang! Ttang! Ttang! And the legendary blacksmith was hammering away.

It was an unusual sight that no one would believe.

“Why did the ward disappear?”

A group of people was entering the forest of the world tree. It was Merchant King Kir and his subordinates. The weighed-down donkeys and carriages made them seem like an ordinary merchant group, but that wasn't the truth. Among these hundreds of people, Kir was the only one classified as a merchant.

Kir spoke to the person who asked about the fully exposed forest, “They probably removed the ward because they knew it was time for me to come back. The stupid naive elves trust me completely.”

Approximately 10 days ago, Kir had managed to infiltrate the elves' village thanks to his successful act, and he poured the Yatan Essence on the world tree. When the elves witnessed the sudden illness of the world tree, Kir turned the cause of the illness onto the other humans and declared he would retrieve healing medicine for the world tree.

Today was the day he had promised to come back, and it was currently at the three-hour mark before the Yatan Essence would lose its effect. Kir returned to the world tree. He was very excited about being able to exchange the elves' treasures for the fake medicine.

“What about after you get what you want?”

“The elves specialties are the branches, leaves, and fruit of the world tree. If they don't give all of it... Then isn't there only one choice?”

“Huhuhu, that is good news.”

Kir smiled wickedly and disappeared deep into the forest with his procession.

Chapter 822

The shape of the red armor in the furnace was relatively intact, while the large axe started to melt as the melting point of the rosar tin was reached.

‘Just a little bit more.’ Grid gazed at the furnace, not even blinking because he was afraid he might lose the timing.

‘Now!’ He grasped the moment when the big axe was melted down and the shoulders and waist of the red armor started distorting. His tongs went into the blast furnace as the generated heat withered the grass and flowers around it.

“The precious flowers...” Some elves made a pained expression. After all, the elves originally hated the humans' vaunted technology because it damaged nature.

Piario came down from the 1,753rd tree and spoke some nonsense, “We humans are a weak species, unlike you. We can't survive naked like you and have to depend on technology. It is also nature's providence. Try to understand humans rather than hate us unconditionally.”

“Nonsense,” the elves expressed their resistance despite their affinity with Piario. “Human technology evolved just for humans to survive? No, that isn't it. Didn't human technology progress to take away things from others and gain what they desire? We hate humans because they are fundamentally greedy. Their greed isn't the providence of nature. It opposes providence. You are speaking nonsense.”

“Haha...” Piario was forced to laugh bitterly as there was nothing wrong with the elves' words. After all, Piario had also lived a life of stealing from others and trampling on them. “I see. It was also greedy of me to ask you to understand us.”

“But...”

“Um...?”

“We also know that there are friendly humans. Like our young friend who is coming soon... I think we can trust a small number of humans.”

Beniyaru knew that Grid, Mercedes, and Piaro could hurt all the elves currently present. However, they didn't hurt the elves. Despite the fact that the elves could have killed them, they forgave the elves. They were quite different from the old humans who had burned the elves' wild land with their dirty desires, wanting the youth and beauty of the elves.

“Well... there are many types of people in this world. We might meet many people like you in the future. However, I wasn't expecting much. We don't have the capacity to deal with all the treachery and suffering we will face until we meet people like you.”

The events were hundreds of years old, but the wounds that humans had dealt to the elves were still prominent. They were still sore and painful. As such, the elves didn't want to understand humans or to be understood by humans.

Ttang! Ttang! Ttang!

As darkness started to fall on the forest of the world tree, Grid's hammering was the only thing heard in the awkward silence.

The sounds of Mercedes, Randy, and the Overgeared Skeletons fighting the bear-wolves served as background noise. However, it currently wasn't as fierce as the first battle because there were only two bear-wolves. Once night approached, no more new bear-wolves appeared.

Beniyaru explained to the puzzled Mercedes, “The bear-wolves are weak at night. They fall asleep as soon as the sun sinks, and new bear-wolves won't emerge again until dawn.”

“I'm glad.” The legendary knight was relieved. The continuous

battle with the bear-wolves was a challenge for Mercedes. On the other hand, the Overgeared Skeletons were disappointed. Their eyes were like ‘ㄷ ㄷ’ as they looked at the bear-wolves and stabbed. They were eager to continue fighting. After all, they were undead and didn’t have any restrictions on stamina, unlike living creatures.

‘Good!’ Meanwhile, Grid smiled brightly as he placed the two sets of red armor on the anvil and starting hammering. He succeeded in completely separating the black mithril from the ogre bones and the rosar tin, and the black iron plate flashed red. The raw material which made up the inner iron plates of the red armor was black mithril. A skilled craftsman had processed it into a fine form, but it wasn’t perfect.

Grid placed the iron plates on the anvil and started the full-scale tempering and forging.

Ttang! Ttang!

‘I can’t lose the unique characteristics of the red armor by damaging the red energy.’

The iron plates should be further strengthened and shaped to the ideal form. Grid thought this as he hammered repeatedly at constant intervals. Tens of minutes and then hours went by.

[You are extremely focused, and the Legendary Blacksmith’s Patience skill has been activated.]

[The Legendary Blacksmith’s Breath has been activated.]

[You are extremely focused, and the Legendary Blacksmith’s Patience skill has been activated.]

[The Legendary Blacksmith’s Breath has been...]

[The Legendary Blacksmith’s Breath has risen to Lv. 7!]

.....

.....

Grid received a compensation effect comparable to when he produced the Enlightenment Sword. It wasn't an effect that could be achieved simply by raising his concentration. He also had to be lucky.

‘Good!’

This was the best start. Grid was filled with joy as his concentration heightened.

[The black mithril is filled with your fighting energy.]

“...!!” Grid’s fighting energy had been kept at the maximum thanks to Mercedes, Piaro, and Beniyaru. Grid injected the solemn red and purple aura fiercely into the black mithril. This was the moment when the true value of the black mithril’s characteristic of having ‘a high affinity with any form of energy’ was revealed. Now, the iron plate made of black mithril was blinking purple as well as red.

‘Maybe?’

Would something beyond his expectations be born?

Ttang! Ttang! Ttang... His hammering became stronger as Grid entered a state of nothingness.

‘Is that a human?’ The elves’ eyes were wide open as they watched Grid work steadily. They were amazed by Grid’s dexterity and focused concentration. In particular, Beniyaru was greatly shocked. ‘How can a human...?’

To think that Grid was able to enter a higher spiritual realm than the elves who had lived for hundreds of years and received the protection of nature and the elementals...? It was an area that couldn’t be seen even by the 12 Te.

‘No, won’t it be difficult even for a high elf?’

What type of life had this human lived? How could he achieve this level in just decades? Beniyaru couldn’t imagine it. Having

been trapped in this forest due to old wounds, it was impossible for her to gauge the lives of the heroes living in the present.

Kyak kyak!

The last two remaining bear-wolves were hunted. Then suddenly, the Overgeared Skeletons that were sitting like puppies next to Grid came forward. They picked a flat rock and started to hit it with their swords. The Overgeared Skeletons seemed to be copying Grid's hammering.

"How lovely."

"Haha, these guys want to learn from their master."

Mercedes and Piaro watched the Overgeared Skeletons with warm smiles. The skeletons looked cute as they tried to copy their master. However, this was a desperate situation for Grid. If he hadn't entered this trance state... he would probably be yelling at the Overgeared Skeletons to stop once he realized that they were copying him. He didn't want to see 'blacksmith' appear in the list of second class advancement for the Overgeared Skeletons... But what could he do? The water had already been spilled.

The Overgeared Skeletons copied Grid's hammering, and their posture soon started to resemble his.

.....

The Overgeared Skeletons were silent for once. Now that they became accustomed to the blacksmithing itself, they were learning Grid's 'focus.'

[Overgeared Skeleton One has acquired the skill 'Skeleton's Patience'.]

[Overgeared Skeleton Two has acquired the skill 'Skeleton's Patience'.]

These notification windows passed through Grid's vision.

Ttang!

Ttang!

‘Okay. A bit more, a bit more...!’ Grid wasn’t aware of them since he was busy hammering the black mithril filled with fighting energy. Meanwhile, an elf approached Beniyaru and whispered, “Kir has arrived at the village.”

“Finally...!”

The world tree’s illness could be cured! The excited Beniyaru told Piaro, “We have to go back to the village for a while. Will you come with me? I will set aside a place for you to take a break.”

“I will stay here.”

“Why? It is late at night. There is a possibility that ancient species more threatening than the bear-wolf will show up. It could be dangerous for you.”

“I can’t interfere with Master’s work. I will stay here with him.”

“...It seems like his work will continue until dawn.”

“No, it could take a few days. But what does it matter?” Piaro would continue to protect Grid for one hundred years, one thousand years. After speaking, he looked at Mercedes. “Take a break.”

“Then please excuse me. I will take the dawn shift.”

She was once again standing vigil with Piaro... Mercedes was reminded of her training days and became cheerful. After the elves left, Noe and Randy fell asleep. Meanwhile, Piaro and Mercedes slept in shifts as Grid’s work continued.

“Ohh...!”

In the elves’ village, the elves’ faces turned rosy as they gathered under the world tree—the ancient tree that sustained the world. It was because the world tree completely regained its health five minutes after Kir sprinkled on it some water, which he claimed

was the only holy water that could cure the world tree.

Well, it was funny to say that the world tree had been in a bad state in the first place. After all, only a few leaves had turned yellow. However, when those few leaves became brighter again, it made Kir's claim of holy water seem real.

“Is it Goddess Rebecca's holy water?”

Elves didn't worship gods. The world tree was the only existence they regarded as great and precious. That didn't mean they denied the existence of the gods. In particular, they had a great liking for Rebecca, the goddess of light. As Kir explained to the questioning elves, his good appearance, soft voice, and smile gave them confidence.

‘Talking with a merchant will make you bewitched.’ One of the famous laws of Satisfy was being fully manifested at this moment.

“That's right. I rushed to the Vatican and poured out my life savings as a donation.”

“Doing all of this for us...”

“You are my saviors. I will do anything for you. Now, everyone.”

Kir felt the elves' attention focused on him. Were there no male elves today? How come men didn't show up last time either? Kir had these questions in mind as he brought a carriage full of jars toward the elves.

“I still have a lot of holy water left. Taking it will help your health. Please share a toast with me. Shouldn't we celebrate the recovery of the world tree?”

“Okay. Let's make a toast.”

The elves' health wasn't a concern like it was for humans. Unlike humans, elves lived for a long time and maintained their youth. In that case, why should they drink the goddess' holy water? Some of the elves thought of this question, but there was no room for them

to think about it.

Adept at leading the atmosphere, Kir had already gotten all the elves to hold glasses in their hands.

“To the eternal health of the world tree.”

Kir drank the holy water, and most of the elves followed, causing all of them to get poisoned and experience a terrible pain. This was the moment when the merchant Kir, who had dealings with the Yatan Servants, showed off the power of the Yatan Essence he had secured in large quantities.

“Kukuk! Kukukuk! Kuhahahahat! Is there anything in the world as easy as deceiving old people who don’t know the world?”

Kir’s nice smile had disappeared. Instead, his evil laughter and the screams of the elves, who were now caught by his men, enveloped the village.

Chapter 823

Ttang... Ttang... Ttang... Amidst the smoky gray of dawn, a hammering sound rang out in the serene forest.

‘It isn’t a matter to worry about.’ Mercedes shook her head in an effort to shake off her thoughts as she watched Grid sweat at dawn.

Why did Grid have Lorex’s axe? Who dropped these sets of armor?

Yesterday, Mercedes witnessed Grid putting the red armor and the big axe into the furnace, and her imagination ran wild. The feelings in her heart became complicated. However, Mercedes knew that the doubts and anxiety stirring her mind were nothing. After all, the worst things she could imagine had all happened in the past.

Indeed, she wasn’t in a position to feel angry or betrayed even if Grid turned out to be the Undefeated King’s descendant, who had slaughtered the Red Knights during the war between the empire and Valhalla.

‘The empire is a potential enemy of the Overgeared Kingdom.’

After all, the empire had the greatest potential to threaten the survival of the Overgeared Kingdom. It was the same even now. Mercedes couldn’t blame Grid for his activities which caused enormous damage to the empire. From Grid’s perspective, they were natural actions. Even if he did deserve to be blamed for it, Mercedes was now Grid’s knight. She had to understand and embrace Grid’s past, rather than hold it against him.

There was only one regrettable thing.

‘If Lorex had known about the relationship between Grid and Piaro...’

Lorex might not have died. Maybe he would be serving Grid by Mercedes’ side right now. Of course, this theory was meaningless.

There were no if's in history.

‘...It isn't a problem to raise a fuss about.’

Mercedes was trying to control her heart when her ears heard something. It was a strange sound that came from nearby.

‘What?’

Was it because she was too immersed in her thoughts? It was shameful that she had allowed something to approach in this empty area. The frustrated Mercedes jumped up while rotating at the same time, with her hand holding a sword naturally. Then her sword hit a solid barrier, and a sharp metallic sound entered Mercedes' ears.

Sensing the turmoil, Piaro immediately rose from his seat and was startled as he witnessed the sight before him. A huge cave cricket the size of a house was attacking Mercedes.

It belonged to an ancient species, creatures that had existed since the beginning. Having lost their homes as human societies developed and expanded, they had long since disappeared from the history of humanity. However, they were alive in the world tree's forest.

“Urgh!” Mercedes was on the defensive.

The creature had a total of eight legs. Two of them were relatively short front legs, and there were four sharp side legs that were used as a shield and weapon. This gave the creature a combat style that was beyond human comprehension. The hunting instincts imprinted on the organism that had survived for tens of thousands of years were beyond measure.

In the end, Mercedes spread her silver wings and flew into the air in an attempt to free herself from the attacks of the cave cricket. However, the cave cricket's long and resilient antennae detected Mercedes' movements in real time. The cave cricket raised its legs and hit Mercedes, causing her to cough up blood as she was blown

away.

“Ku....ock!”

How could a noble knight possibly be hit by an insect?

However, Mercedes didn't have such arrogant thoughts. After all, the giant cave cricket was a monster that couldn't be defined as an insect.

Its outer shell was harder than a wyvern's scales, and its strength was higher than that of the bear-wolves in the daytime. Furthermore, its irregular attacks were hard to figure out. Therefore, the difficulty of this confrontation felt like it was on a higher ground. Mercedes wasn't dealing with an enemy that acted thoughtlessly based on instincts.

The ground began to sink. It was a phenomenon caused by the giant cave cricket bending its hind legs. As this continued on, the ground caved in around the place where the cave cricket was bending down. However, at this point, the cave cricket had already jumped high into the sky.

“Mercedes! Wake up!”

What was this giant leap? Mercedes was staring blankly at the cave cricket high in the sky when Piaro's shouts entered her ears.

“Growth!”

The trees that Piaro had been pruning for a day grew rapidly. The branches which had been cut off were restored and covered with lush leaves. Thanks to the sudden growth of the huge trees, the cave cricket couldn't land on the ground and struggled among the trees. The giant branches were cut off by the front and side legs of the cave cricket and trampled on by its hind legs.

Mercedes quickly recovered from her blank state and focused sword energy on her swords, covering them with a white light that shook off the darkness. Meanwhile, Piaro was using Pounding Mortar without hesitation. Simultaneously, a huge object fell from

the sky and landed on the body of the cave cricket.

“Pledge Sword!” Mercedes then rushed forward with her silver wings and stabbed the cave cricket’s bulging belly several times. It was a collaboration of two legends who had past experiences of destroying great demons.

However...

“Uh!”

“Ha!”

Their combined power wasn’t enough to destroy the cave cricket. The cave cricket’s weakness was that it was only active at night. Nevertheless, the strength of the cave cricket that had reigned as a supreme predator since the beginning was comparable to a monarch of hell.

“This thing...” Mercedes was stunned for a moment when she noticed the corpses of dozens of bear-wolves beyond the large trees that had been cut down due to the struggle. That was the cave cricket’s trail, and now it was planning to feast on the small and adorable creatures called ‘humans.’

As soon as she grasped the cave cricket’s pure desire, Mercedes’ insight started to detect its movements little by little. Piaro also thought of methods to deal with it. “Please restrain its actions fully. I have to clear a large field. Buy time for me while I am farming.”

“Understood!” Mercedes responded vigorously while avoiding the frontal attack of the cave cricket. The ground shook every time the cave cricket’s front legs struck it.

Meanwhile, the rock where Grid, the anvil, and the portable furnace were located shook like it was going to collapse. Nevertheless, Grid was solely focused on his work. From the moment of the cave cricket’s emergence to the present, he hadn’t shown a moment of agitation.

It might be an exaggeration to say that he didn't seem aware of the battle taking place. However, the amazing thing was that it wasn't an exaggeration. Grid was in a world of his own, one which consisted of him, his hammer, the anvil, the fire, and the metal.

‘I feel it.’

The ogre bones were tempered into their ideal form, and all their potential power was pulled out, causing the black mithril's fighting energy to surge in response. Meanwhile, the rosar tin calmed down the ogre bones and the black mithril.

Ttang! Ttang! Ttang! Grid's hammering became more delicate as his concentration rose endlessly. The constant reoccurring effects of the Blacksmith's Patience and Blacksmith's Breath made Grid and the metal extremely robust. Finally...

‘Now!’

Grid saw the end.

[You have completed the item production!]

[The blacksmith god is very surprised. He says that his skill has once again been overtaken by a human.]

[The other gods are laughing at the nervousness of the blacksmith god.]

[Affinity with the blacksmith god has decreased by 1.]

[If affinity with the blacksmith god reaches -10, any items made (above legendary rating) will be cursed.]

[Current affinity with the blacksmith god is -2.]

The full plate armor, which could look red or purple depending on the refraction of light, was completed. Its name was Hero King's Armor.

Mercedes' swords were burning with a silver flame-like energy.

She couldn't afford to hold back her strength in front of an ancient predator that couldn't be included in any category with a human's common sense.

The cave cricket fought with sheer force. With the transcendent leap from those hind legs and the strength of a mountain, the fast and irregular attacks from the hard but flexible front legs, and the antennae and side legs that removed any blind spots... The cave cricket was like a creature born for battle, while Mercedes was a small soldier striking against an impregnable fortress.

The difference in power was great. Mercedes' body was wounded as she confronted the cave cricket with White Tiger's Attitude. Meanwhile, Piaro was still farming. 'Just a little longer!'

He needed to perfectly restrain the cave cricket in order to beat it. Having made this judgment, Piaro spent a great deal of time clearing the field and using Free Farming. Mercedes only needed to hold on for three more minutes. No, he prayed earnestly that she could hold on for two more minutes.

However, in Mercedes' eyes, two minutes seemed like an eternity. Her White Tiger's Attitude collapsed when the cave cricket's side legs, which had been used for defense, suddenly switched to offense. They breached Mercedes' defense perfectly and stabbed her in the sides.

As Grid was making her a new set of armor, Mercedes' leather armor hadn't been repaired. Therefore, it hadn't been working properly from the very beginning. It wasn't a set of armor but a rag.

Mercedes shook as the cave cricket's four side legs and two front legs poured down toward her like rain. Cracks started to form on the silver wings wrapped around Mercedes' body. Dozens of sharp hooks at the tips of the cave cricket's legs broke through and tore at the surface of the silver wings.

Although Mercedes endured it, she couldn't shake off the despair

in her heart. ‘How fleeting is my existence?’

She had worshipped heroes and trained for all her life. Praised as the strongest knight on the continent, she had eventually become a legendary knight. However, it would all be in vain in the end. The legend of humanity was just prey for an ancient species. The passing years, the resolutions in her heart, and her hopes for the future were all wishful thinking.

‘I’m sorry.’

In the end, her silver wings fell down like glass. Amidst the glittering remnants, Mercedes held onto the White Tiger’s Sword. The last mission on her mind was to protect her master’s treasure. In order to buy some more time, Mercedes’ blue hair gradually turned white as she wrapped sword energy around the sword. The white hair was like shimmering moonlight, and Mercedes boasted a radiant beauty in her last moments.

Then the cave cricket’s front legs flew toward Mercedes’ small face.

“XX monster, ” rough cursing that Mercedes was hearing for the first time filled the air. “Why is an insect as strong as a great demon?”

It was Grid. He wore Lantier’s Cloak, which was strong against physical attacks, and used Revolve on the cave cricket. Then he handed armor to Mercedes. “Put it on. From now on, you’ll be able to exert your real skills.”

There was a wide smile on Grid’s face. It was because the name of the cave cricket before him was flashing gold! Grid was expecting a huge reward now.

“Noe! Randy! C-Can you Become the King of the Dead?”

“Nyang!”

Kyak kyak! Kya kya kyak!

Grid's party appeared in full swing in the field that Piaro was clearing.

Simultaneously, at the operations team at the S.A Group's headquarters:

“Maybe he will hunt it?”

“...It is crazy. Really crazy.”

Yoon Nahee and the operations team monitoring the dozens of monitors in real time quietly blurted out these lines.

The giant cave cricket was a disaster-type monster that was supposed to play a role in reducing the number of elves along with the launch of the multiple species episode. However, it couldn't play its role due to the variables of Overgeared King Grid and Merchant King Kir.

In the end, it had become a raid target. Mercedes' presence was too big. No matter how legendary a knight she was, for her to be able to fight against the cave cricket...

‘In this situation, if Grid meets Kir...’

Grid's nature meant he might rescue the elves and maintain their numbers. In that case, the dark elves episode was likely to be lost.

‘The survivors of the 12 Te were going to fall under the temptation of Yatan to balance the power...’

How many times had this happened? It was difficult to remember how many times the scheduled story had been changed by a player.

“Will it be okay?” Yoon Nahee let out a laugh at her team's worries. “Have you forgotten the chairman's message? Satisfy is a world where the history is made by players. We don't have to feel concerned over this.”

Yes, they could only silently watch. Who would become the final winner of this long history?

Chapter 824

‘This is a monster I’m not meant to catch.’ Grid noticed it the moment he faced the giant cave cricket.

It had a disgusting appearance that couldn’t be endured by ordinary people, and it didn’t fall down despite being hit by two legendary NPCs. The cave cricket was at a level that players couldn’t reach. Once he combined all these factors, Grid knew the giant cave cricket wasn’t meant for players. There were no chances of winning if a player met this monster.

‘I’m certain. A normal person will be stunned just by looking at it.’

It was a super large version of a cave cricket. Grid thought about its eyes, stretched-out snout, long whiskers, bent antennae, translucent skin, and so on... These were features that were hard for humans to accept. It felt like a few people would faint when they saw the giant cave cricket and then try to sue the S.A Group.

Additionally, there was clear proof that the giant cave cricket was a monster not scheduled to meet players.

‘It appears to be an event monster related to a specific story.’

Grid had been playing Satisfy since the open beta test. Unlike the talented people in the game, he had experienced rock bottom. He didn’t have regular experiences, and it wasn’t difficult for him to understand the nature of certain monsters.

Behind Grid, Mercedes was changing into the new set of armor, and the leather armor she had been wearing since she left the empire fell to the ground. That was when Grid confirmed the information of the leather armor.

[Old Leather Armor]

[Durability: 15/140 Defense: 60]

-The armor that Legendary Knight Mercedes wore during her days as Piaro's aide. The performance of the armor isn't bad, but it has long lost its original function because it can't withstand the long years that have passed.

Weight: 290

User Restriction: Level 180 or higher.]

"Wow..." Grid was appalled. He had analyzed Mercedes' worn equipment with a Legendary Blacksmith's Eyes and thought it should have a level limitation of 200. However, he had no idea that the performance of the armor was such garbage. The usage condition was level 180, but the leather armor's actual performance was like a set of level 20 armor.

"Fighting with something like this... Heok." Grid turned his gaze toward Mercedes, only to close his eyes with horror. It was because he'd caught a peek at Mercedes' body as she just started wearing the red and purple full plate armor. Grid blushed while Mercedes was casual about showing her naked body. She wasn't embarrassed since this was the process that a knight used to wear equipment.

"It is shameful to blame the equipment." There was a determined expression on Mercedes' face as she adjusted the hinges of the armor. "However, I changed my mind since using the sword that I borrowed from Your Majesty."

The more formidable the equipment, the higher the strength would be. It was an undeniable truth. The newly enlightened Mercedes made a new chivalric code, "Overgeared... Is that what you called it? In the future, I will also be overgeared."

It happened at this moment.

[Legendary Knight Mercedes has created a new chivalric code.]

[Legendary Knight Mercedes' stats have increased by 10%. Every time she wears a high rated item, she will receive a compensation effect.]

[If the legendary knight Mercedes wears epic rated items, she will receive an additional 5% increase in the item stats (apart from the options). If she wears unique rated items, she will receive an additional 7% increase in the item stats (apart from the options). If she wears legendary rated items, she will receive an additional 10% increase in the item stats (apart from the options). If she wears myth rated items, she will receive an additional 20% increase in the item stats (apart from the options).]

[The legendary knight Mercedes has equipped the Hero King's Armor.]

[Due to the class bonus of wearing heavy armor, there is a 20% increase in defense.]

[A myth rated item has been worn. The stats of the Hero King's Armor that Mercedes is wearing have increased by 20%.]

“What?” Grid's eyes grew bigger and twitched as he realized the unique nature of a legendary knight's chivalric code was more than he'd imagined. In awe of Mercedes, Grid felt a greater liking toward her.

‘Pagma's Descendant in the future...’

Grid was well aware of the fraudulent nature of Item Creation. He could mass produce a large number of high rated items. However, Grid's own stats didn't increase when he used Item Creation. On the other hand, Mercedes had overwhelming growth every time she made a chivalric code, while Sword Saint Kraugel was able to build his own skills based on Swordsmanship Creation.

It was evident that the attack power of Pagma's Descendant would fall over time compared to other classes. Just as Grid was feeling frustrated, a voice entered his ears.

“My strength is Master's strength.” It was Mercedes' soft voice. Grid looked at her and once again admired her. She was so beautiful. The intense combination of white hair and transparent

skin with the red and purple armor took Grid's breath away.

[Hero King's Armor]

[Rating: Myth

Durability: 1,430/1,430 Defense: 1,190

* Strength increased by 200.

* Two of the wearer's highest stats will increase by 15%. If strength or intelligence increases at this time, there will be 300 additional attack power. Physical defense will increase by 300. An increase in agility will raise accuracy and evasion by 12%.

* Increases magic resistance in proportion to the wearer's intelligence.

* The effect of the wearer's highest level skill will increase by 25%.

* The cooldown of the wearer's two lowest level skills will decrease by 10%.

* Attack power will increase by five for every hit (Up to 500).

* The power of all wide-range skills will increase by 20%.

* When a large weapon is equipped, attack power will increase by 10% and attack speed by 5%.

* There is a low probability of accumulating 'incomplete fighting energy.' Stats will rise every time the incomplete fighting energy rises by 10 points.

-An armor that the legendary blacksmith Grid, who even the gods admire, made for the legendary knight Mercedes.

-A heavy armor made of black mithril filled with the red energy of the Saharan emperor, ogre bones and rosar tin, and the fighting energy that was given by Grid.

Due to the limitations of the rosar tin, there is less defense. However, it has the ability to give more aggression to the wearer as

the battle continues.

Weight: 3,020

Conditions of Use: Grid or Mercedes.]

It was an armor that couldn't be sold. Who would buy it for an expensive price when Grid and Mercedes were the only ones who could wear it? Still, Grid wasn't worried.

After all, the Hero King's Armor was made only for Mercedes. Grid had no thoughts about commercializing an armor with such excellent performance in the first place. He wasn't certain that he could get another black mithril that contained the emperor's red energy.

'The defense is lower in exchange for offense.'

Step. Step. Step.

Mercedes wore the armor and steadily walked through the forest that was transforming into farmland. The giant cave cricket's antennae detected Mercedes as its aggro was still focused on her. Then it moved soundlessly. The cave cricket swung its legs through the air. The sharpness of its legs cut through the wind, air, and space in 0.1 seconds to reach Mercedes.

Mercedes' might've had a 10% increase in stats from making the chivalric code, but it was still impossible for her to avoid the cave cricket's attack completely. Not only was the cave cricket fast, but it also aimed at all types of gaps in her defense. Mercedes disregarded defense and took the offensive. This was a judgment that was different from before as when she wore the leather armor, she had tried to block some attacks.

The cave cricket made a confused sound. The small creature stuck to its legs. The sweet smell of blood disseminated and flew away, while the creature clung to it like a rock.

"It hurts." Mercedes gulped as blood flowed from her side and grasped the White Tiger Sword more firmly.

Step. Step. Her pace didn't stop. The distance between Mercedes and the cave cricket was now only four meters. The cave cricket's ability to detect danger was fast, just like an insect's instinct. Compared to the past, the number of Mercedes' offensive attacks had increased, and the cave cricket had no intention of allowing Mercedes to get close to it.

“Kuk...!”

The cave cricket had become faster...?

Mercedes was forced to use White Tiger's Attitude once the Hero King's Armor started to lose its durability. She maintained a slow pace as she advanced steadily. Suddenly, four golden hands flew in and started to assist. They were Grid's God Hands.

Then what was Grid doing? A strong aura came from the sky. Grid had flown up there. He swung the Enlightenment Sword and shouted, “Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle!”

Kuwaaaaaang! The storm of fighting energy descended. It was Grid's signal.

“Growth! Threshing! Polishing!!” After finishing the clearing, Piaro quickly spread all types of fast-growing grain and seeds, making them explode. The farmland received a lot of damage and collapsed. Mercedes was the only one who had access to the cave cricket.

“Ohhhhhh!”

Thanks to the Hero King's Armor, Mercedes was able to exert more damage by accumulating damage. Her swords hadn't been able to penetrate the skin of the cave cricket earlier, but they entered easily now and caused great damage. The cave cricket struggled as some of its nerves were damaged. Its eight legs moved strangely in every direction, forming a sight that could induce someone to vomit.

However, Grid wasn't shaken at all. He had learned to control his

emotions after seeing the boys and girls raised like cattle in the Tower of Eternity. Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle crushed the shell of the cave cricket.

“Fated to Perish!” Piaro ultimate attack dug into the cave cricket’s inner flesh.

Kyak kyak! Kyak kyak kyak!

“Lightning Discharge! Discharge, nyong! Nyang nyang nyang!”

The Overgeared Skeletons, Randy, and Noe also attacked the cave cricket with all their might. The cave cricket’s cries stirred up the forest at dawn. The effect of God's Command was activated, and Grid used a second Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.

[Your level has risen!]

A really welcome notification window popped up in front of him. The growth of his pets and the items dropped were a bonus...

[Your memphis Noe’s level has risen!] x8.

[Doppelganger Randy’s level has risen!] x3.

[The level of Overgeared Skeletons One and Two have risen!] x15.

[3 ancient weapon enhancement scrolls have been acquired.]

[5 ancient armor enhancement scrolls have been acquired.]

[59 ancient steel have been acquired.]

[67 shells of an ancient species have been acquired.]

...This wasn’t a bonus. It was too big to be called a bonus.

Chapter 825

A loud siren rang out, and the red lights installed all over the production team's offices flashed without interruption. The mechanical sounds rang out repeatedly.

[x;;72ZX987B19 has disappeared.]

[Three large episodes will be permanently deleted.]

[188,490 out of 390,112 related quests are now unlikely to occur.]

[Restoration of x;;72ZX987B19 is recommended.]

[Correction.]

[x;;72ZX987B19's dropped items have been acquired by a specific player. It is recommended to rollback the server.]

“What?”

Category x;; entities had a great influence on Satisfy's world view. Among the great demons, only eight were given the code 'x;;' and there were only five NPCs. It was extremely unlikely that contact with players would occur, so the ancient species were classified as 'secret monsters.' Among them, the giant cave cricket was classified with an x;;.

The dark elves episode, which was scheduled to take place, was meant to reduce the number of elves to one-tenth of their current population and darken the 12 Te. The 12 Te would then sell their souls to the great demons and become dark elves. As a result, players would be able to select from various types of species and create different power structures during the 'Great War' episode.

However, this all flew away at once. Why had this suddenly happened?

The leader of the third production team, Rahul, saw the warning messages on the monitor and shouted, “Convene an emergency meeting right now! It is the first bug in Satisfy's history! We have

to respond quickly!”

Rahul’s Korean was so perfect that it was hard to believe he was Indian.

Chatter chatter! The production team was upset and hesitant about where to start fixing this.

“It isn’t a bug.” The manager of the operations team, Yoon Nahee appeared. She handed paperwork to Rahul. “It is something that happened due to two players. There is no bug in the current situation.”

“Did I learn Korean wrong?”

Rahul was a genius with an IQ of over 180, so it had been easy for him to learn Korean which had become more influential since the launch of Satisfy that now dominated the world market. He asserted himself that his listening and speaking abilities were perfect, yet he couldn’t understand Yoon Nahee’s remarks. It seemed like an alien language.

“Players encountered an x;; code monster and raided it? Do you expect me to believe such nonsense?”

“It is true. Will it make sense if I say that the Overgeared King and Merchant King are involved?”

“The Overgeared King and Merchant King...!”

“Yes. This is how it happened. Merchant King Kir succeeded in discovering the forest of the world tree and simultaneously tried to obtain wealth from the elves.”

Kir had briefly made the world tree sick and deceived the elves. Then he returned and captured them. As a result, the incident of some of the elves being eaten by the cave cricket was absent.

“...It prowled the area after losing its food and ended up meeting Grid?”

“Yes.”

“...” Rahul could no longer deny reality. He knew the power of Overgeared King Grid better than anyone. How surprised was he when he saw the character details of Grid, the protagonist of the Fourth National Competition’s Breaking the Hero? Rahul had almost fallen down. He could still feel the bruised bones from that time. Rahul thought that no one would be able to clear the Fourth National Competition’s Breaking the Hero.

‘It might be possible for the Five Miracles, including Kraugel. But...’ Rahul shook his head.

“Was Mercedes with him?”

Mercedes’ legendary knight story had caused a huge impact in the S.A Group. How many NPCs were there that had SSS potential stats? There were thousands. However, most of them were waiting for their talents to blossom. In the meantime, some NPCs sadly perished.

It meant that the expectations of the S.A Group toward the youngest of them, Mercedes, hadn’t been high. Moreover, she had originally been scheduled to be killed by the insane dragon. The empire would then fall on that day. However, this episode had been deleted due to Grid and Kraugel. Afterward, Grid saved Mercedes and she became his knight.

“You should remember the leader of the fourth team. Mercedes was supposed to be a short-lived character, so he designed her with greater affection.”

Keen insight—it was a passive skill that would show an overwhelming performance as time passed and the skill developed.

The leader of the fourth team, Chen, had said that if Mercedes could grow, then she would be able to develop ‘foresight.’ However, since she was a short-lived character that was unlikely to exert an influence on Satisfy’s subsequent world setting, she had been given a fraudulent skill.

“How can she stop that monster...? ...No?” Rahul was trying to convince himself when he suddenly cocked his head. He was reminded that the combat power of the giant cave cricket was equivalent to the 28th great demon.

“How can the cave cricket... Ah!”

It was due to Knights Summoning! A chill went down Rahul’s spine as he remembered the characters Grid had obtained from a long time ago. “I understand... Now I understand everything.”

Merchant King Kir had used his unique intelligence and resources to obtain the elves, while Grid had used his unique strength and people to handle the cave cricket. Rahul was convinced of the situation once he recalled all of their abilities. “Yes... In the end, a rollback won’t happen. We can’t reverse history written by the players themselves.”

“That’s right. Even if it was a bug, I wonder if he would’ve allowed a rollback.”

The water was already spilled, and there was no fault behind the water being spilled. It was a natural phenomenon. Rahul was able to calm his mind. “I’m glad it wasn’t a bug...”

Their chairman would be happy again. Rahul thought about Lim Cheolho’s interest and affection for the Five Miracles.

“Why aren’t you convening a meeting straight away?” An angry voice rang out from the office’s entrance. It was Chairman Lim Cheolho. Hadn’t he been enjoying the variables created by the Five Miracles over the past few years? Who would have imagined this...?

Lim Cheolho headed over to the confused Yoon Nahee and Rahul and explained the severity of the situation. First he asked, “How many players and NPCs have a myth rated item?”

“Well...” The production team leader, Rahul, couldn’t answer.

On the other hand, Yoon Nahee of the operations team replied

immediately, “There are 17.”

“Have any of them succeeded in enhancing the myth rated item?”

“No.”

“What if someone strengthens multiple myth rated items by themselves?”

“...The balance will crumble.”

Enhancing an item increased its stats. The higher the basic stats of the item, the higher the increase would be. This was why the probability of enhancing a myth rated item was extremely low.

“This...!” Rahul made a dumbfounded expression and sighed. He was reminded of the items that the cave cricket dropped—the ancient weapon and armor enhancement scrolls! They were supposed to emerge when at least 20% of the players were armed with legendary items. What if Grid succeeded in enhancing a myth rated item that ordinary players didn’t even have access to?

“Not only the Five Miracles but most of the existing named NPCs won’t be able to resist.”

Lim Cheolho clearly remembered that the ancient scrolls definitely increased the item’s enhancement level by 1–3. Grid had three weapon and five armor scrolls, so it was possible for him to make a myth rated armor or weapon ranging from +4 to +7.

“What should we do? Should we shut down the server once?”

There was no concept of a pause in Satisfy. Having it formed a structure that would just drive players away from the game. Lim Cheolho smiled. “No. We can’t damage hundreds of millions of people just for one person. I will go and meet directly with Grid.”

“You will go and speak with him directly?”

There were rumors in the company that the chairman’s account would be a ‘god’ in Satisfy. Would they finally see a god? Yoon

Nahee and Rahul gulped as their expectations rose to the extreme. Their expectations were huge enough for them to forget about the seriousness of the situation.

“I know that I can’t use my position to force anything upon Grid. But I am certain I will be able to persuade him as he also loves Satisfy sincerely.”

After all, it was a case where Grid’s life was changed by playing Satisfy. His affection for Satisfy had the potential to be greater than Lim Cheolho’s. Lim Cheolho felt hopeful as he logged into Satisfy.

[Name: S.A Group Chairman Lim Cheolho

Level: 29

Class: Fisherman

* The longer the fishing time, the greater the probability of catching good fish.

Strength: 29 Intelligence: 49

Stamina: 175 Agility: 21

Concentration: 75 Endurance: 19]

There were few environments as good as Satisfy to enjoy his hobby of fishing. As such, he raised his character only through fishing! Deeply concerned that someone would see his ID, Lim Cheolho immediately sent a whisper to Grid.

&S.A Group Chairman Lim Cheolho: I am Chairman Lim Cheolho of the S.A Group. This is the first time saying hello to you separately. It is very nice to meet you. I want to share a story with Youngwoo-ssi...

[The target has blocked you.]

“...?”

Was there something wrong? A chill went down Lim Cheolho’s

spine.

“People are crazy. Now there is someone impersonating Lim Cheolho.”

It was after killing the cave cricket that Grid received a whisper while confirming the information the ancient scrolls, which definitely enhanced an item by 1–3 levels. The more famous a person was, the more whispers they received. It was a chance for Grid to see how many crazy people there were in the world.

“Did something happen?” Mercedes asked anxiously.

Grid shook his head and pulled out the Enlightenment Sword. ‘This is an item that will be kept to the end.’

Therefore, he was confident he wouldn’t regret using the ancient weapon scroll on the Enlightenment Sword!

“Please be +3!”

Grid was full of ambition as he used the ancient weapon scroll on the Enlightenment Sword without hesitation. He was filled with the expectation that the unique characteristic of Pagma's Descendant would help the enhancement go straight to +3.

The result?

[You have successfully enhanced the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires!]

[The Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires has increased to +1!]

“Damn rotten luck XX system!”

There was a chance to get 1, 2, or 3, yet he got 1? Grid’s anger reached its peak, and he lost his temper. However, he stopped just as he was going to throw the +1 Enlightenment Sword to the ground.

[You have succeeded in enhancing a myth rated item, and a hidden piece of Pagma's Descendant has opened!]

The newly emerged notification window relieved his anger and sadness.

Simultaneously, Lim Cheolho said, "I will go to Grid's house."

He hurried to his car after logging out.

Lim Cheolho was the best scientist, the greatest human in modern society, the world's best... so on and so forth. This person that even the president found hard to invite was going to visit an ordinary (?) young man's house. It was a big matter that would decorate the world's headlines if it were made known.

Chapter 826

A limited edition supercar, of which there were only three models released in the world, captured the attention of every driver on the road. Moreover, it was in an East Asian country! The other drivers made way in their lanes, and the owner of the supercar, Lim Cheolho, was able to make his journey faster than expected.

“Um...”

The late autumn landscape was filled with widespread foliage. Lim Cheolho was able to calm his mind as he headed into the suburbs.

‘Isn’t Grid supporting his family?’

Grid was someone who had succeeded at a young age and owned a building. Taking into account the nature of young people at this age, it wouldn’t be strange if he enjoyed his own independent life. However, Grid looked after his family. He kept his original intentions by looking after his parents and sister while playing games.

‘I can’t arrive empty-handed.’

Lim Cheolho was going to ask Grid for a favor, and it was also a place where Grid’s other family members lived. So, he had to prepare a gift... But what gift? When had he ever needed to worry about this? Lim Cheolho called the name of his most trusted friend, “Morpheus.”

[Yes.]

It was the best supercomputer! The world’s top supercomputer that maintained Satisfy immediately responded to Lim Cheolho’s call.

Lim Cheolho asked, “What type of gift would be most appropriate for a high school girl a few months away from

entering university and a couple in their mid-50s?”

[The first place gift for a high school girl who wants to go to university is a full-body plastic surgery certificate while the top gift for the couple in the mid-50s is divorce papers.] Morpheus took no more than one second to answer. Its analysis combined various data embedded in its many servers and was both fast and perfect.

“I see... Um.” Lim Cheolho made a surprised expression. As humanity’s top scientist, he trusted data, but he also had common sense. He understood the plastic surgery certificate, but it didn’t make sense to show up as a guest and give divorce papers as a gift.

“What are the second place and third place gifts for a couple in the mid-50s?”

[Skin care gifts and travel abroad vouchers.]

“Okay. That’s it.” Chairman Lim Cheolho showed a satisfied response. Then Morpheus asked for confirmation, [I will order a plastic surgery certificate, which has the most experience with high school girls and the highest patient satisfaction, through the cheapest site. Will that be okay?]

“Yes. Please order the cheapest and best skincare vouchers and overseas travel vouchers as well.”

[Yes.]

These gifts were perfect. Lim Cheolho’s burden was relieved, and he smiled with satisfaction as the many gift certificates arrived on his phone. The supercar increased in speed after reaching the suburbs and soon arrived in front of Grid’s building.

“It is a bit out of Seoul, but the air is good.”

[The fine dust density is good.]

“It is a nice neighborhood.” Chairman Lim Cheolho looked around as he got out of the car. The area around Grid’s building was filled with flower gardens. It was so peaceful that couples sat

side by side in the flower garden while drinking coffee. Then he saw some buildings across the road from Grid's.

“Do those buildings belong to the Overgeared members?”

[Yes. These buildings belong to Yura, Jishuka, Regas, and Pon. Jishuka, Regas, and Pon are expected to move to South Korea within the next few months.]

“Haha...” Chairman Lim Cheolho's heart was moved. He was proud to see that bonds that had been built up in Satisfy transferred to reality. “The young people who love Satisfy are a blessing...”

Chairman Lim Cheolho was once again convinced. He was certain that Grid's affection toward Satisfy was no less than his own as the creator. Grid had obtained a new life from Satisfy, so Lim Cheolho was sure that Grid would be praying for Satisfy's infinite success.

‘He will definitely understand and listen to my request.’

Chairman Lim Cheolho's steps were light. He took the elevator to the top floor and encountered Toon—a Satisfy high ranker who had been part of the Italian Mafia. In recent years, Toon had been a main member of Overgeared who was active as Grid's bodyguard. He was also someone whose life had changed due to Satisfy.

“I'm really glad to see you.” Chairman Lim Cheolho looked at him with a proud expression.

However, Toon was puzzled. “Have we met?”

“...”

“From here on, you can't enter unless you have a prior appointment,” Toon spoke firmly as he stood in the hallway and brushed his teeth. It seemed that he had just woken up.

Lim Cheolho smiled at Toon. “You must be lacking sleep.”

After all, this person was Lim Cheolho. He had been in the

newspapers every day since Satisfy was released, and he was always in the top Internet search rankings. Lim Cheolho was a person who was welcomed anywhere and at any time.

How could a Satisfy player, let alone a high ranker, not recognize him? Lim Cheolho thought that Toon made a mistake due to sleepiness. However, he was mistaken as Toon was a man who had little interest in the world. His life had been too hard for him to pay attention to people living in other worlds.

“Who are you?”

“...”

Wasn't this too absurd? Lim Cheolho was at a loss for words for a moment before recovering his spirit. Then he whispered to Morpheus, “Please call Grid's parents.”

[His mother or his father?]

“...Connect me to the one who responds faster.”

[I understand.]

A man was blocking the hallway to the front door. His sleek and strong muscles had a threatening appearance while his eyes resembled those of a wolf. Lim Cheolho gulped as he faced someone who saw him as an ‘enemy’ for the first time in years.

In the meantime, Morpheus succeeded in calling Grid's parents.

(Hello?)

“Is this Shin Youngwoo's father?”

(That's right...)

“Hello. I am S.A Group's chairman, Lim Cheolho. I am glad to greet you this way...”

Dududu...

“...”

Chairman Lim Cheolho had been dedicated to in-company

activities and official activities for the past few years. He had been cut off from ordinary lives and belatedly realized that the weight of his name was now too big. That's right. The reason why Grid had blocked his whisper and why Grid's father had cut off the phone call was due to the weight of the name, Lim Cheolho, carried.

‘They think I am an impersonator!’

This was a complete impasse! It was a big deal to suffer something like this in such a desperate situation. Lim Cheolho felt upset.

Dding~

Then a girl showed up in the elevator behind Lim Cheolho. It was Sehee dressed in a uniform.

“Uh...?”

Lim Cheolho and Sehee saw each other and were surprised.

‘She didn't add any compensation effects to her profile picture and game character?’ Lim Cheolho was surprised that Sehee's face, body, and skin tone all matched up perfectly with what she looked like inside the game.

‘Why is he here at our home?’ Sehee was shocked to see Chairman Lim Cheolho.

“H-Hello?” Unlike her brother, Sehee was polite and gave a greeting despite her confusion.

Lim Cheolho made a gentle expression as he saw her bow her head. “Hello. Hahah! This is a surprise. I prepared a gift for nothing.”

He would have to refund the full-body plastic surgery certificate as soon as possible. Sehee looked at the deep in thought Lim Cheolho and smiled brightly. “Did you come to celebrate Oppa's birthday?”

“...Huh?”

The cake in Sehee's hands captured Chairman Lim Cheolho's gaze. Morpheus analyzed the situation and whispered, [The top birthday present for a male in his late 20s is a Satisfy exclusive luxury capsule. The second-ranked gift is an epic rated or higher Satisfy item.]

“...He already has a lot better.”

Lim Cheolho had come to get back an item rather than to give one. Well, it wasn't bad. He was looking forward to meeting Grid.

“Ah, what is it?” Shin Youngwoo complained as he was forced to log out due to Sehee's continuous calls. He still had one hour and a half left of his daily connection time. There were many things he could do in this time, so he didn't like that his sister was urging him to log out.

However, as expected from the Comet Group's diamond capsule...! Grid didn't have a bird's nest for hair despite having lain in the capsule for more than 12 hours. He didn't even need to stretch his body to make sure that he wasn't stiff. It was the convenience of a luxury capsule that ordinary people couldn't get a glimpse of.

“Where did she go after calling me?”

Shin Youngwoo was in a spacious room which contained only a capsule and a fridge. He quickly realized he was alone in this game room he called his 'office' and headed out to the living room. Then he was surprised.

“Congratulations on your birthday!”

“Happy birthday!”

Sehee and Yerim smiled while setting off firecrackers.

Youngwoo's expression went blank. A birthday message and pretty decorations covered the living room walls. There was also a

table set up for a birthday party. Shin Youngwoo saw the unexpected scene and asked, “Is it my birthday today?”

“I knew this would happen,” Sehee pouted. “I didn’t call you to eat in the morning, so did you have lunch? The seaweed soup was still the way I left it.”

Youngwoo’s parents spoke up as well.

“So what if you are working hard to earn money? You should take care of your nutrition! Is there any point in Korean people not eating rice?”

“It is good that you don’t smoke, but you should take care of your meals, just as your sister and mother said.”

“Yes...” Youngwoo smiled bitterly and nodded. He was touched by the sight of his parents, Sehee, Yerim, and Toon, who was now like a family member, sitting before his birthday party table. Despite forgetting about his own birthday, Youngwoo was glad that they had prepared for this day. In particular, Toon’s eyes were red with tears. He was an orphan, so holding a birthday party gave him a great deal of pleasure.

However, in the midst of this friendly atmosphere...

“By the way... why is Chairman-nim here?” Youngwoo took his seat and asked this to Chairman Lim Cheolho. Both Youngwoo and Lim Cheolho had awkward expressions on their faces. Who would’ve expected this development?

Chapter 827

Shin Youngwoo was in a very uncomfortable state.

Due to his enhancement failure, he had gotten so angry that he almost lost his sight. The ancient enhancement scrolls enhanced items from +1 to +3, but both the Enlightenment Sword and Valhalla of Infinite Affection had only increased to +1. Wasn't that the lowest value possible? His luck was truly bad.

As such, Shin Youngwoo had been forced to stop the enhancement. He wanted to be cautious with the remaining ancient scrolls and would use them when his luck was high.

It was natural to be cautious. One enhancement level increased the basic stats of the item by 5%. This value was very important when looking at myth rated items with basic stats exceeding 1,000. He would be able to secure a difference of dozens or hundreds in attack and defense with just one enhancement level.

‘Furthermore, it is likely to be hard to obtain the ancient scrolls again in the future.’

Shin Youngwoo had noticed from the beginning that the giant cave cricket wasn't a monster meant for players to hunt. It hadn't used any special magic or skills, but its basic stats were simply too high.

How could a player beat the cave cricket when Piaro and Mercedes had failed and suffered serious injuries? It was likely that Shin Youngwoo would've experienced death if he had attracted the cave cricket's aggro. This made it understandable that such a strong monster dropped the fraudulent ancient enhancement scrolls.

“Umm...” So when Shin Youngwoo sat facing Lim Cheolho at his birthday party, he muttered, “Why is such a big person...?”

The VIP guest, Chairman Lim Cheolho of the S.A Group, had

come to celebrate Shin Youngwoo's birthday! What was the title of this new hidden camera broadcast program? There was no other explanation for this. Chairman Lim Cheolho, who only appeared in magazines or on TV, was actually sitting in front of Shin Youngwoo on his birthday? Was this a normal scene?

Shin Youngwoo tapped his fingers before coming to a conclusion and asking, "Is this a hidden camera TV show?"

Shin Youngwoo started to feel excited. He was looking forward to the gift that the S.A Group had prepared for him after he contributed to the National Competition. Maybe it would be enough to make up for the two wasted ancient enhancement scrolls?

Unable to hide his expectations, Shin Youngwoo looked like an excited child. His family was the same.

As he met the burdensome gazes of the family members, Lim Cheolho was very stressed. He was used to meeting the presidents of the United States and China, yet now he was uncomfortable when facing these ordinary family members. It was difficult for him to disappoint them.

"Hum hum." There was a moment of awkward silence. "First of all, happy birthday. I am very happy to personally meet a great player like you, Grid. I am a huge fan." He was being sincere.

Lim Cheolho respected all of Satisfy's players, but he felt greater liking for certain players. In particular, he felt great respect for the five people called the Five Miracles. The supercomputer Morpheus couldn't predict their actions, and the pleasure that gave Lim Cheolho couldn't be converted into money.

"Ah..." Youngwoo's face reddened. His heart was pounding as he felt Lim Cheolho's sincerity. He couldn't help being moved. After living a life at the bottom, Youngwoo had grown up, succeeded, and become someone who was acknowledged by one of the greatest people in the world. A joy that was difficult to describe filled him,

blinking out his mind.

It was the same with Youngwoo's parents. Chairman Lim Cheolho, who was a famous person, a great scientist, and an entrepreneur, had come to congratulate their son on his birthday and profess to being a big fan. This was a sight that seemed like a dream.

"Hehe."

"Hum hum."

Sexy Schoolgirl Yerim and Beast Master Toon looked at Lim Cheolho and Youngwoo's family with warm expressions. This was a heartwarming sight, yet it was an atmosphere that made Lim Cheolho feel increasingly burdened!

"Hum hum." Lim Cheolho pulled out a handkerchief and wiped the sweat flowing down his face. It had become hard for him to tell Youngwoo to return the ancient scrolls. While he was feeling embarrassed about that, Youngwoo's mother gave him some rice and said, "Please eat."

She was aware that Chairman Lim Cheolho was a busy person, so she would cut her son's birthday cake right after Chairman Lim Cheolho ate something. Chairman Lim Cheolho was surprised when he saw her dark nails. "Are you still doing work in the fields these days?"

"Yes, of course."

Everyone in South Korea knew that Youngwoo's parents personally farmed the vegetables they sold. Even Chairman Lim Cheolho was aware of it.

"Why do you need to suffer when your son is enjoying great success? Isn't it enough for you to hire people or to stop working?"

"The successes of a son is separate from his parents' lives. How can we spend our son's hard-earned money? We aren't old enough to retire, so we should work too."

That wasn't all. Youngwoo's parents thought about the past. The real reason they worked even harder than before was for Youngwoo's sake. Their son was currently experiencing great success. Therefore, they constantly gave to charity in their son's name out of fear that people would feel jealous of him. They personally sent their vegetables to orphanages and nursing homes.

It was also meant as a repayment of their debt. As parents, they hadn't been able to believe in their son and hadn't given him any strength back when he was having a hard time. Youngwoo's parents couldn't get rid of their feelings of guilt toward their son. However, this caused Youngwoo pain. As their son, he had always gotten involved in incidents and had never been praised. He had gone to university thanks to his parents, yet he hadn't studied and had ended up in debt.

Nevertheless, his mother had prepared breakfast for her son every day, and his father hadn't turned against him. They had done enough for him and had been waiting a long time for him to find success. Yet now they were sorry toward their son? Youngwoo felt like a sinner. He was the son who broke their hearts in the first place. If he had even half resembled Sehee, then his parents wouldn't have a shadow in their hearts now.

"..." The previously harmonious atmosphere sank, and an awkward silence flowed. Lim Cheolho felt like he was sitting on a cushion of thorns. Yerim and Toon were staring at him. They seemed to be saying, 'Why did you make the atmosphere like this by saying unnecessary things?'

"Hum hum." How long had it been since he last felt someone's blatant resentment? Lim Cheolho was embarrassed for a while before smiling in an attempt to recover the atmosphere. He took a spoonful of food. Was there a need for other people to say so much? In the end, as parents and children, they would be able to understand each other, care for each other, and find greater happiness.

“It is delicious.” Lim Cheolho couldn’t remember how long it had been since he last ate a homemade meal. It was probably 33 years ago when he lost his parents.

Lim Cheolho had a gentle expression as he ate the rice and seaweed soup. ‘I was treated to warm rice, so I must repay them.’

Recalling the original intentions he’d had when he made Satisfy, he had dreamt of everyone being happy. He wanted Satisfy to be a world beyond a game and for it to give people joy they couldn’t feel in their harsh realities. Yet, now, he had come here to put a constraint on a person just because of the game balance? Would he forcibly take away the happiness a person had obtained after suffering? What was this unscrupulous act?

‘I have become too rigid.’

Chairman Lim Cheolho put down the cutlery and said, “Overgeared King Grid.”

“Yes?”

“I will give you a small hint. The reason why you’ve grown so much isn’t because you are Pagma’s Descendant.”

“...?”

It was hard to understand what Lim Cheolho meant since Youngwoo had reached his current position due to becoming Pagma’s Descendant. Lim Cheolho explained to the confused Youngwoo, “NPCs... The act of treating the people who live in Satisfy as if they are people is the thing that has made you what you are now.”

Could the Overgeared Kingdom have been born if there had been no talents beside Grid? That was impossible as Grid wasn’t versatile enough to have done it all by himself. It was because he had been able to support Khan’s wounds, rejuvenate Piaro, and meet Rabbit that allowed him to be reborn as the Overgeared King.

“I hope you don’t lose your foundations,” Chairman Lim Cheolho

spoke meaningful words and rose from his seat. He had no intention of interfering with the family's birthday party any longer. So, he put on his coat and gave a large present to Shin Youngwoo. There were travel vouchers for his parents and a hint. "You have become angry due to the blacksmith god a few times."

"...?"

"Please be aware that there is a big relation with Pagma's Descendant's class quests."

It was a big hint. This was a huge hint for Shin Youngwoo who was afraid to use the 'Divinity' skill due to the blacksmith god's curse, and it eased some of his mental burdens. Shin Youngwoo asked excitedly, "Isn't it too much to be called a birthday present? Can you give this privilege to a specific player?"

"Privilege? Did I give any to you? I was just speaking to myself."

There was no doubt that problems would arise from Grid hunting the cave cricket and obtaining the ancient enhancement scrolls. However, Lim Cheolho regained his original thoughts and decided to leave the flow of Satisfy to the players.

"Let me say a few more words to myself," Lim Cheolho said while putting on his shoes at the front door. While nodding to Youngwoo's parents and Sehee, he whispered, "Even if you are a few times stronger than you are now, there are countless strong enemies that you can't face alone. Don't be so overconfident that you lose the things precious to you."

The catastrophic episodes designed to deal despair upon all of humanity had largely been deleted. From the players' standpoint, the various variables caused by this were a poison.

One example was the empire's grand master. This person, who originally should've been killed by the insane dragon, was currently still alive. Like Mercedes, he was an NPC with one of the highest growth potentials. Unlike Mercedes, there was no one to

put a brake on his growth since he was a grand master.

How could the players handle the vicious NPCs who would continue to reign, unlike the insane dragon that would just go crazy for ‘a while’ before leaving? Lim Cheolho wondered this as he left Shin Youngwoo’s house.

After that...

“Do you acknowledge me now after the S.A Group’s chairman came personally to celebrate my birthday?” Youngwoo asked Toon while shrugging.

“Uh. I acknowledge you.” Toon was perfectly accustomed to life in South Korea and raised his thumb.

Chapter 828

“The richest person in the world is stingy.” Yerim, who had become more bewitching as the years passed, clung to Youngwoo’s forearm and looked at him with shiny, teary eyes that captured a person’s soul. “Didn’t he come to celebrate Oppa’s birthday? Why did he just leave without giving Oppa a gift?”

“No, I got a great gift.” Youngwoo patted Yerim’s head in a familiar manner. No matter the type of offensive she took toward him, Youngwoo only recognized her as a sister. This was natural as Yerim was Sehee’s best friend after all!

“A great gift?”

When would this person see her as a woman? Yerim sulked when she saw that Youngwoo wasn’t shaken no matter how close she was to him. As she wondered when the seal on her would be released, Youngwoo gave her a meaningful smile and said, “Yes. It is a gift that is too big to be valued.”

He wasn’t exaggerating.

[The blacksmith god is closely related to the class quest of Pagma’s Descendant.]

Chairman Lim Cheolho’s hint was more precious than gold. If Grid’s affinity with the blacksmith god fell to -10, he would receive a curse. The thought of this curse made Youngwoo feel uneasy and placed great restrictions on his behavior. However, he could now feel expectant rather than afraid.

‘Will an event occur when I receive the curse?’ Youngwoo’s heart beat faster in anticipation. He wanted to access the game quickly. His family members and friends noticed this.

“Don’t you have an hour and a half left of connection time? We can have the birthday party after that.”

“Sehee...” Youngwoo was touched. Where in the world could you

find a sister who would know and give consideration for her brother's Satisfy access time? He hugged Sehee firmly before heading straight to the capsule.

In the midst of the calm morning forest, a quiet wind blew through the leaves. Mercedes was sitting alone on a large rock. She closed her eyes and recreated the battle with the giant cave cricket in her mind.

‘In conclusion...’

She was convinced that she would've been able to withstand the cave cricket's barrage if she had a sturdy shield. Mercedes judged that a shield would be more efficient than double swords when dealing with enemies stronger than herself.

‘The swordsmanship of my family isn't that good.’

Mercedes used double swords because her swordsmanship was based on the Vaintz swordsmanship. She had always believed that the sword techniques she learned since childhood were the most suitable for her. However, she realized she was mistaken after becoming a legend. The Vaintz swordsmanship might be useful for killing many enemies but it exposed too many gaps to strong enemies. This was a clear limitation of the Vaintz swordsmanship.

In fact, hadn't she ultimately relied on the Supreme Swordsmanship during the Astaroth raid?

‘So, there is no reason to be obsessed with the double swords.’

King Grid had known this from the beginning, which was why he had said he would make her armor and a shield.

“...” While Mercedes was thinking about her new armor, she suddenly opened her eyes. Her keen insight pierced deep into the forest, and she could feel the presence of thousands. They couldn't just be the elves coming back with companions from the village. Some of these presences were clearly human. Moreover...

‘The elves have lost the strength of the elementals.’

It was unusual. This was just shortly after the giant cave cricket raid. Grid had left to go ‘rest’ while Piaro finished pruning and then returned to the vampire cities. As such, Mercedes was currently alone in this place. “...”

Her task was to wait until Grid finished his rest and came back. She thought for a moment before climbing up a tree and hiding there. It wasn’t comparable to how an assassin would have done it, but it was still a sufficiently stealthy act. Soon after...

“Why are you trying to call the elementals? Don’t be silly and just walk quickly.”

A procession of humans and elves appeared. Thousands of elves were tied up together in a line, while hundreds of humans mocked as they watched over them.

‘What...?’ Mercedes was confused. Hadn’t Beniyaru said that her ‘friend’ had arrived in the village and that she would come back after meeting her friends? Then what was this situation? Mercedes gritted her teeth. She had a vague idea of what Beniyaru and the elves had been through. The elves had lost the light in their eyes, and the wounds on their slender bodies incited Mercedes’ anger.

However, she thought inwardly, ‘I’m not qualified to be angry.’

Mercedes’ heart cooled down as she thought this.

After all, who was she? She was a knight of the empire who had invaded countless nations and decimated numerous immigrants. Of course, she hadn’t done those things because of her own will as a person but because of the emperor’s commands. Although she might not have enslaved them or mocked them, she had still taken their lives.

‘...I was also like them.’

She didn’t deserve to criticize them. As Mercedes realized this, she closed her eyes, wanting to turn off this horrible sight. In the

first place, she was in a position where she had to ignore it. She didn't have the right to act freely and save the elves without Grid's command. So, Mercedes sat on the branch and clenched her fists.

However, someone on the ground sensed her presence.

"Hrmm." It was Knight. He was someone who had won a small PvP tournament in Russia.

Knight had even beat Alexander, who was known to be the strongest player in Russia so far. However, his identity was close to obscure at the moment as there was a high level of awareness of him only in Russia. This was because Knight was a person who didn't want to be influential.

Still, his skills were undoubtedly excellent. This was the reason why Merchant King Kir had squeezed out a lot of money to hire him. Discovering that Knight had stopped his horse, Kir approached him. "What is it?"

Knight thought for a moment before shaking his head. "It isn't a big deal."

Of course, that was a lie. His passive skill, Death God's Sixth Sense, told him that the presence he sensed from the top of the tree was classified as the 'highest risk.' Fortunately, she didn't seem to have the will to fight. It would be nice if they didn't encounter each other and just passed by.

Knight judged this would be the best situation and rushed Kir. "Don't we have to arrive at the nearby temple before the duration of the Yatan Essence finishes? We should hurry."

"Ah, yes." Kir listened to Knight's opinion and sped up the speed of the march. He whipped the elves' backs and urged them to walk faster. A few players acted like they were having fun as the sound of whips rang through the forest constantly.

Beniyaru ground her teeth together. Why had she believed in humans? Her foolishness had once again placed the elves in a great

crisis. She wanted to bite her tongue and die. However, she couldn't die. Beniyaru pledged that she would survive and someday save all the people who suffered today because of her. She had to persevere through this shame and pain.

Kir noticed her mindset. "That is a good expression. No matter where you are, try as hard as you can. I look forward to the moment when your will is broken. Kukukuk."

"Dirty human!" Beniyaru's anger reached its peak. She lost her temper and made another attempt to gather her mana and call the elementals. However, it was just an act of giving pain to herself. "Kuaaack!"

The Yatan Essence had penetrated deep into her body, burning Beniyaru's mana and blood. Beniyaru's eyes turned white, and she struggled with the terrible pain. Kir's eyes became like crescent moons as he watched her spew out blood from every orifice in her body.

"Money is truly the best. The more expensive the goods, the better they are. Isn't that right?"

For the sake of this day, Kir had traded with the Yatan Servants and spent as much as 40 million gold, which was around 48 billion won. Why did he pour so much money into a game? Ordinary people couldn't understand Kir's behavior. However, this expenditure was an obvious investment from Kir's point of view. It was also a successful investment.

Kir thought that 40 million gold was a cheap price for obtaining a whole species.

'Once sold into slavery, the elves I captured today will earn me more than 40 million gold.'

However, the real profit that Kir gained from this incident wasn't the elf slaves. It was the right to the world tree. If he continued collecting and selling the fruit, branches, leaves, and

bark of the world tree, Kir estimated that his income would be equal to that of a country.

‘Father, are you watching? Your son was able to grow brilliantly, unlike you who met a miserable and humiliating end.’

He would live differently from his father. There was only one step left in the oath Kir made at the miserable funeral.

“Sigh.” Kir took a deep breath. He stepped forward to hasten the speed of the march when he saw something. A pale red pillar of light was formed right before his eyes. It was the effect that occurred when a player logged in.

“...?”

Had someone else discovered the forest of the world tree? Kir’s group was confused, but they weren’t very wary. After all, they knew that the stupid elves had removed the ward to welcome them. That’s right. The forest was now a place where any dog could enter. It was no longer a place that only special people could visit. Moreover, there was only one opponent, so there was no reason to be vigilant.

“Let’s go.” Kir’s group planned to ignore the player who had just logged in. However, they couldn’t ignore the person.

[Grid].

“...?! ”

It was because the person who logged in was a huge player. This wasn’t an illusion, this was real.

“What is this situation?” Grid faced the thousands of people as soon as he logged in. His eyes gradually narrowed as his confusion grew because he was witnessing thousands of captured elves being led by unidentified players.

Kir hurriedly approached on his horse to shake Grid’s hand. “Are you Grid? It is an honor to meet you. I am the 1st ranked merchant,

Kir.”

As usual, Kir displayed a smile that made people feel good. However, Grid didn't respond to Kir's handshake. Grid was reminded of the 3rd ranked Muto's words as he looked at the elves and opened his mouth, “Beniyaru, can you hear me?”

“Grid?” Kir stood in front of Grid to block his view because Grid's eyebrows twitched when he looked at the elves. “Aren't you busy?”

Grid showed him an indifferent attitude! Kir's eyebrows twitched, but he made an effort to maintain his smile. “Your attitude isn't very good. You are the king of a nation and one of the top players. Don't you know the basic manners?”

“Hah.” Grid was no longer a fool and became aware of the situation. He knew clearly the terrible treatment that the thousands of wounded female elves would receive in the future. As such, Grid's expression hardened.

Then Kir said to him, “Isn't this frankly none of your business? I think it would be good if we just pass each other by.”

Kir was also a ranker who was called the best. His sense of rivalry toward Grid was much greater than he had expected, and he unknowingly spat out those provocative words. Grid asked, “Good for each other? Isn't it only good for you?”

As he scoffed at Kir, Grid scouted the elves with his high insight.

“...” He soon discovered the wounded Beniyaru. Grid suppressed his boiling anger and asked, “Can I help you?”

“...Why...?” All types of things were implied with that question. Grid stared at the shaky Beniyaru and gave her his first gentle smile since their initial meeting. “I have received a lot of help from the high elf called Sticks. I want to help you to repay him.”

“Do you think I will let you act as you like?” Kir smiled and raised his killing intent. It was a signal.

“Look at this dirty jerk! Do you think you are so great just because you won once against Kraugel?”

“Why are you interfering with others in the first place?”

Kir’s colleagues cried out and pulled out their weapons. Grid was still staring at Beniyaru as he waited for an answer.

“...” Beniyaru’s eyes shook. In her despair, she had just made a promise not to trust another human. Now she wasn’t convinced that she could once again believe in a human. However, Grid had pulled out the name Sticks. Furthermore, Grid hadn’t hurt her in the past despite having the opportunity to do so. In the end...

“...Help us,” Beniyaru begged. “Please! Help us!”

Her eager cries struck Grid in the heart. “Yes. I will act as the Apostle of Justice.”

“...?!”

A fist quickly hit them...? The faces of the Kir’s Company members distorted as they were hit by Unbreakable Justice.

Chapter 829

Unbreakable Justice was an area of effect skill that dealt 300% of his attack power. The members of Kir's group that were around level 250 couldn't respond to Grid's immediate skill and were struck by his fist.

[You have suffered 2,900 damage.]

[You have suffered 3,150 damage.]

“Kuk!”

Fast. It was an attack that they couldn't see. However, it was bearable. While Grid might've been ranked first in PvP, it would still be difficult for him to kill them instantly while they were equipped with unique rated equipment. The five players attacked by Grid relied on the items that were available to them since joining Kir's Company and attempted a counterattack. The narrow field of view of an ordinary player didn't notice the threat coming from behind them.

[You have suffered 11,290 damage.]

[You have suffered 9,870 damage.]

“What?”

Someone else's blade flew towards them? The players were astonished as they looked behind them and saw the spinning blade before belatedly discovering the silver thread hanging from the end of the blade. The blade flashed red and headed towards the sword in Grid's hand as if it were being sucked into the sword, forming the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires.

Thanks to the ancient scroll, Grid succeeded in enhancing it to +1 and the Enlightenment Sword was 5% stronger than before.

5% was an ambiguous value. If a weapon with 100 attack power

was increased by 5%, wasn't it just an increase of 5 damage? 5% wasn't much when applied to rare-epic rated items. Despite this fact, however, people were still obsessed with this 5% figure.

There were many cases where victory in a fight was determined by a small difference in stats, let alone an attack power that was 3,780+189. The figure of 5% was too big to ignore for high-rated items with high basic stats. The additional level in enhancement for the Enlightenment Sword raised its attack power by 189 damage.

This was why Grid was very sad. 'Shit! If I succeeded in getting it to +3 then the additional damage would be over 567!'

Why was it only +1? Grid used Quick Movements to raise his agility and speed before rushing into enemy territory without hesitation. He either avoided or blocked all attacks coming towards him with the God Hands and fought back with the Enlightenment Sword.

[You have suffered catastrophic damage!]

[You have died.]

[You have suffered catastrophic damage!]

[You have died.]

"What...?"

The faces of Kir's group lost their color, stunned at Grid's brutal attack power that killed their colleagues with one blow.

'It's different from what I saw in the video!'

It was rare for there to be any Satisfy user who hadn't watched the videos of the National Competition. Those who missed the live broadcast would watch the reruns, and the high-profile PvP videos were watched countless times by any one person.

Kir's Company wasn't any different. They obtained money and items while serving Kir and dreamt about becoming rankers

someday. For them, the National Competition's PvP videos were a means for them to live vicariously, while also serving as a textbook.

From the 1st National Competition to the 3rd National Competition, they watched dozens of videos of Grid fighting and sometimes defeating famous powerhouses. They had felt confident that they saw through Grid's way of fighting. They had the audacity to say that they could defeat Grid as long as they watched out for the black state and white state (Assimilation), as well as his 'quick attack skill' that instantly killed most enemies.

But what was the reality?

"Cough!"

They were gravely mistaken. Grid's movements, which they could easily track in the video thanks to the help of high-speed cameras, were actually so fast that they couldn't be followed with the naked eye. His attack patterns, which seemed so simple compared to Kraugel's, were actually hard to predict in person.

Grid's battle style of being hit and counterattacking was only expressed against opponents whose control was superior to his own.

Kir's members couldn't go against Grid's 'relatively normal control.' They couldn't even determine where Grid would come from and at what timing. More than anything else, though...

[You have suffered catastrophic damage!]

[You have died.]

His attack power was too strong, and they all died in a single blow.

"This is ridiculous!"

It was only 30 seconds. The faces of Kir's Company all blanched in shock as they witnessed more than 10 of their colleagues die in a

short period of time. One of them even became a frightened puppy and cowered back in fear.

Furthermore, Grid's face didn't show any excitement. Merchant King Kir, who was the most likely to build a kingdom after Grid and Ares. His trusty subordinates and colleagues that he was so prideful of, they were all just ordinary people to Grid as he continued the absolute slaughter without stopping.

“What should we do?”

“Give me a command.”

The magician ‘Boutian’ and the female scimitar user ‘Arisa’ approached Kir and asked.

They were colleagues who had been with Kir ever since he first discovered the forest of the world tree. They were very strong, with their levels at 349 and 351 respectively. On top of that, they were also armed with legendary items, all thanks to Kir.

“I’m still thinking.”

Kir couldn't easily move. The two groups led by Boutian and Arisa had a total of 30 people. While they were all third advancement rankers, it was still questionable if they could go against Grid. This was due to Grid's Knights Summoning.

‘It is also possible to summon my knights, but...’

He had left three named NPCs in his city, who should be able to handle the Overgeared members that Grid summoned. However, Piaro was the real problem at hand. Piaro was Grid's right hand man who played an overwhelming role during the great demon raid. They couldn't go against a named NPC who had probably already completed his growth.

‘Knights Summoning isn't the only thing I have to be careful about.’

Kir might've met Grid for the first time today, but he was very

impressed with Grid. Was it due to Grid's strength? No. Kir was already familiar with Grid's strength. He foresaw from the beginning that Knight would have to expose himself to stop Grid. Unlike this rabble, Merchant King Kir's discerning eyes were real.

Then what caused Kir to feel surprised? It was Grid's 'intelligence.'

'His brain works very quickly.'

If Grid wasn't smart, he would've chosen to not save the elves. He would've tried to build a good relationship with the 1st ranked merchant rather than become hostile to Kir. However, Grid had saved the elves, and directly had the elves ask for his help in order to build a foundation for the future.

'Grid saw it instantly.'

Right now he was taking a big risk, but choosing to save the elves would be a much bigger benefit for him in the long run. Grid was the first player king for a reason. The ignorant look that he exposed in the media over the years was just paltry acting.

'Damn snake.'

Grid must have something else besides the Knights Summoning. Otherwise, he wouldn't have moved to deal with 400 enemies alone. Arisa spoke confidently to Kir, who was unable to make a choice.

"What if it is just simple arrogance?"

"...?"

"He is the best in the world. It is likely that his sense of pride from beating Kraugel has ruined him. Think about it: assuming that he can even manage to summon 10 knights, that is just the maximum number of people he can summon. Would the Overgeared members be on standby 24 hours a day? Is that even possible?"

“...”

“Maybe the number of knights he can summon right now is similar to what you can summon. Even if he can call upon more people than expected, we have a lot of people here right now. Thinking too much can be poisonous.”

“...”

Kir was silent as his brain worked on overdrive. Finally, Boutian used Magic Detection and opened his mouth, “Kir, it is as you expected. Grid seems to have something else besides the Knights Summoning.”

“What is it?”

“There is a rodent hiding above our heads.”

“Just one? Are you certain?”

“Yes. In the first place, our position is too favorable. Look, Grid isn’t using any wide-area skills despite us having superior numbers.”

Why?

“He is concerned about the elves being swept away.”

“It’s meaningless even if he uses Knights Summoning. And as for the burning rain of arrows created by Jishuka? We can just use the elves as a meat shield.”

Arisa clapped her hands in excitement as she exclaimed, “Right! If Kir threatens to kill the elves, then we can fight more thoroughly.”

Trying to keep their current status would just be a disadvantage for Kir. If Kir was willing to take some damage, he would be able to win this battle that started somewhat abruptly.

“...Okay.” Kir finally made a decision and proclaimed, “I will smash Grid using our numbers advantage. Let’s show the power of Kir’s Company to the prideful Overgeared King.”

“Good!”

The flow of battle would change from now on as Boutian, Arisa, and the other top members took the stage. The high-level company members’ morale skyrocketed as they witnessed Grid running wild.

-Knight: Do you intend to give up on the elves?

Kir received a whisper from Knight, who had been watching the situation from one step away. Kir frowned. He had invested a whopping 40 million gold into this operation. The damage would be hard to recover from if he gave up on the elves.

-Kir: That is impossible.

-Knight: Then I won’t stop you. I will do my best to fight as much as I am paid. Just.

Knight wore a black robe that covered his body and pulled out a giant scythe befitting his ‘Death God’ class. He added,

-Knight: I won’t risk my life, as it isn’t worth a bit of gold. I will retreat if I feel threatened.

-Kir: ...Is Grid that strong?

Kir knew about Knight’s Death God's Sixth Sense. It was something he had to take into account. Knight replied, “It is a question mark.”

“....???”

A question mark? Kir made a confused expression.

“It means I can’t measure him. For example, there is the skill called Blackening. Grid still has room to increase his combat power, so the system can’t measure him properly. Well, he is the person who beat Kraugel. He is certainly strong. However, haven’t you determined that you can handle him? I will leave Grid to you.”

Knight thought the real problem was something else. The problem was the ‘highest risk’ rodent hidden in the trees. The

giant scythe dug into the tree, smoothly felling it in one quick motion. As the tree trunk crashed onto the ground, a woman with white hair appeared: Mercedes. She ruthlessly swung her sword at Knight as soon as she fell from the tree.

Kir's eyes widened in shock as he shouted, "The First Knight?! Why is she here?!!"

"The First Knight?"

Knight was also upset, but he didn't retreat just yet. He believed that he should act according to what he was paid. The power of the Death God that exerted power over all targets with a finite life exploded outwards. The bushes and trees in the area wilted as a new 'soul gauge' was created at the bottom of Mercedes' health bar.

"Shouldn't you hurry if you don't want your soul to be eaten away?"

The huge image of a death god appeared behind Knight's back. It was something that Alexander hadn't seen when he was easily knocked down by Knight. That's right, Alexander was defeated without being able to bring out Knight's entire strength.

Chapter 830

It was obvious by his name, but Knight was a player who originally dreamed about becoming a knight. Since the opening of Satisfy, he had devoted himself only to training and quests to become a knight. However, that dream was unfulfilled. He even received a curse.

The knights division Knight had an apprenticeship with met an unexpected enemy and were then wiped out. He moved cities and kingdoms, but things always turned out the same way. Knight's companions always died. This was the result.

[You have opened the power of a death god.]

[The spirit of life is perceived as an enemy.]

[The energy of death covets the soul of the target.]

Knight obtained the growth type hidden class, Death God. Compared to his original target of being a knight, this was a class with an unparalleled power. Yet Knight wasn't pleased. It felt like the stigma of a death god was mocking him.

"12 minutes... The reputation of the First Knight is real after all. This is the first time I've seen such a solid soul."

"..."

"You will die if you don't hurt me in 12 minutes," Knight warned Mercedes, smiling bitterly as he saw her soul gauge being consumed slowly. The dark curtain that fell over the area veiled his appearance.

'These dogs aren't strong like Immortal.'

Almost half of Immortal's members had endured Grid's basic blow. He had to hit them two or three times for them to die. This was despite the fact that they were necromancers. It was estimated

that their high rated items and the increase in stats given by their titles were quite high. They were truly a group made of rankers.

Then what about Kir's Company?

“Keok!”

“Ugh!”

They were one shot one kills! The members of Kir's Company turned to gray with just one blow from Grid. They were incredibly weak compared to the Overgeared members, Valhalla, and Immortal.

‘It's funny.’

Why did so many players nurture their characters carefully? It was because they wanted to become stronger than other people. They felt the greatest joy when boasting absolute invincibility... just like the current Grid.

[The target has died!]

[The target has died...]

[The target has...]

Grid drew a sharp line with the Enlightenment Sword, and three members of Kir's Company turned gray simultaneously. There were also members who couldn't approach due to the Magic Missiles being fired from the God Hands floating to the left and right of Grid.

‘The hands are good.’

Grid's joy kept rising as he overwhelmed hundreds of enemies alone, and a smile spread across his face. However, even so...

“Now!”

“These dogs.”

He didn't become careless. Grid maintained his extreme concentration and swung his sword without leaving a gap for the

enemy to strike. So, why did he bother wasting power to defend against the trivial attacks? It was in order to hide his hidden card. Grid wanted to conceal the poison being emitted by the +1 Valhalla of Infinite Affection as much as possible.

‘There will be rankers present.’

The top rankers were like hyenas seeking the right time to aim at him. It was inevitable that Grid would be wounded when they started to act, so he was certain the poison fog would be a significant variable at that time.

“Kuaaaack!”

Grid’s fighting energy increased gradually. Then as he became stronger during the fight, his red and purple aura rose up. His basic attacks wreaked greater havoc, and his improved agility made the cooperation between level 250 players meaningless.

“Hup!”

“Hiik!”

His flashing eyes caused the hearts of the Kir members to freeze. Grid smiled throughout the battle and realized the gap that existed between those with high strength and those with low strength.

‘It isn’t enough...’

This was beyond their imagination. The Kir members had watched Grid fight against the giants of other worlds and Great Demon Belial dozens of times on the TV and Internet, but he hadn’t been this strong. To think there was a gap of over 100 levels...?

They had thought they would be able to overcome the gap somewhat with their control skills. Now, they realized the control skills they were so proud of was at the level of an elementary school student. What about the difference in items? They had thought they would be able to overcome the gap with the various unique items they’d received after joining Kir’s Company. Now,

they clearly realized that Grid's strength wasn't just in his items.

What about their numerical superiority? A confrontation of one person against hundreds would naturally be advantageous for them. However, now they were experiencing it. There was a limitation of having a great number of people. Hundreds of people couldn't attack a single person at the same time. The space was too limited.

'This won't do.'

'Who can win against that monster?'

It was admirable that Kraugel had been able to compete with this monster for a short time.

"What are you doing?" Grid said, suddenly appearing right in front of their noses. The members of Kir's Company flinched.

"Why are you so absent-minded? Should I beat you like you did the elves?"

"T-That..."

There were few people who could resist the mob mentality. Once one member started to step back from Grid, the other members around him started to retreat as well. Grid took one step forward, while they took three steps back. Then he took one more step, and they fell over each other's feet.

The pride they'd felt about belonging to the huge Kir's Company had long been lost. Just as the Kir members sank into despair, a voice entered their ears, "Use the elves as a shield!"

It was the call of Merchant King Kir.

"Swap to ranged weapons! Those who know how to use magic, don't save your mana potions! Push at Grid without resting! Don't shrink back! You will be safe if you use the elves as shields!"

'Safe.' This one word raised the morale of the Kir members.

The members of the company hid among the thousands of elves

and pulled out weapons like bows and throwing daggers. The magicians, who hadn't been able to perform their roles due to the Magic Missiles fired by the God Hands, also started to cast magic.

A total of 32 rankers, including Boutian and Arisa, started to act as well.

“Stone Shower.” Boutian's magic dumped a pile of stones onto Grid. Meanwhile, Arisa reached Grid's side and swung her scimitar.

“Heh, I didn't expect you to block it. Did you get better after the National Competition?” Arisa smiled with admiration as Grid blocked her attack. “But won't this be more difficult?”

Quick Movements—it was the buff skill that Grid or the God Hands developed using a specific ‘dagger’ as a medium. Due to watching hundreds of Grid's battles, Arisa knew that its duration was about to end, and it was just as she expected. While avoiding Boutian's continuous spells, Grid avoided Arisa's second and third attacks before being hit by her fourth one. Arisa's scimitar fell like lightning and cut Grid's chest as Arisa's subordinates joined her belatedly.

“The timing is perfect.” Grid laughed with ridicule as he faced Arisa's colleagues.

“...?” Arisa's eyes widened in confusion after hearing Grid's murmur.

[You have become affected by poison!]

[It is an irresistible poison!]

[You will receive 4,300 damage per second!]

‘What?’

Where had this poison fog suddenly come from? The poisoned Arisa began to panic. Her subordinates joined her one step late and bombarded Grid. The swords and spears stabbed at Grid's body.

Every time it happened, a dark green fog was released from Grid's armor.

“Cough!”

A crazy situation unfolded as the health gauges of the dozens of people attacking Grid simultaneously started to decrease significantly.

“Isn't this a scam? What type of defense mechanism is this?”

There was poison in addition to the high defense? Arisa moved backward with a frown and hurriedly drank an antidote. However, it was a foolish act. Taking a potion in front of the target without restraining their actions was no different from committing suicide.

Grid asked, “Don't you have experience dealing with enemies much stronger than you?”

He mocked Arisa's stupidity as his sword pierced Arisa's chest. This was the moment when the health gauge of the level 352 ranker, Arisa, was reduced by one-fifth with a single strike.

[You have suffered 14,900 damage.]

[The durability of the Organ Armor has decreased by 20.]

“Huh?”

Why did a basic attack contain so much power? Arisa's face hardened as she suffered great damage despite the legendary armor she wore. She sensed her impending death and closed her eyes, expecting the black flames that killed Tarma in the National Competition to engulf her.

However, the flames didn't explode. Instead, Grid recovered his sword and quickly left this place to avoid the Earthquake spell that Boutian had used. The other rankers chased Grid. During the time in which Arisa had been taking an antidote, the rankers used all types of buffs that increased their power by 200%.

No matter how strong Grid was, the power of 30 rankers with

levels in the 300s wouldn't be easy to handle. Therefore, he used a skill for the first time. "Pagma's Swordsmanship."

That's right. So far, Grid had only been using basic attacks, and no one in Kir's Company had noticed this until now.

"Wave."

"Avoid it!"

Link, Kill, Wave, Pinnacle, Transcend, and so on—most of Pagma's Swordsmanship had been exposed to the world. As such, all the talented rankers were prepared to cope with Pagma's Swordsmanship and were quick to respond. They hurriedly moved their bodies away from the range of Wave's sword energy.

"Over here!" Boutian cried out as he hid among the elves like a rat and continued using magic. Arisa and the rankers rushed to his side and hid among the elves, grabbing and threatening them with blades to their necks.

"There is a limit to the power of an individual, no matter how strong."

"I don't know how you happened to be with the First Knight, but can you rescue all the elves?"

"Stop fighting right now. Then we will give you a few elves as gifts. Let's leave each other on good terms."

The selfish members of Kir's Company deluded themselves.

"XXX." Grid wasn't greatly concerned about the elves. The reason Grid didn't use a wide area skill wasn't because he was afraid of harming the elves. He just didn't feel the need to use skills to handle these small fries. "Now it is annoying."

The Kir members ignited Grid's rage again by taking the elves as hostages, and the cost for it was disastrous. The Enlightenment Sword was filled with a red and purple energy as the Hero King's fighting energy sublimated the power of the Undefeated King. Grid

used 100,000 Army Massacre Sword—a skill which had been used against the dragon that had suddenly emerged in the National Competition.

“You—!”

The company members were astonished that such a ruthless skill was being used. Arisa hurriedly shouted, “Are you insane? Are you planning to kill all the elves?”

“What?” Grid jeered but his eyes weren’t smiling. “The elves won’t die from this.”

His sword tilted, and the intense aura around his body shone like a sun shortly before exploding.

“100,000 Army.”

Boutian was the person Grid viewed as the strongest in Kir’s Company, and that’s why he was the target. Grid’s sharp sword aimed at Boutian.

“Wait! Wouldn’t you rather use that power to help the First Knight?” Kir’s voice suddenly rang out. “I don’t know what the story is but isn’t the First Knight accompanying you right now? Her life is being threatened by the Death God.”

Grid paused the activation of the skill and spoke in a tone that was as calm as possible, “Death God?”

Then Grid’s gaze shifted and saw that Mercedes’ bright hair had lost its pigments as she was trapped in the dark curtain. A scythe held by a bone-white hand aimed for her neck.

“That player is a master of defense and has the power to deal a definitive death to the target. I am convinced that his special way of fighting is beyond the most powerful NPC...” Kir looked at Mercedes and Knight while explaining, only to close his mouth before finishing.

Mercedes suddenly unfolded bright wings of light and raised her

sword. The darkness surrounding her on all sides was broken, and a pillar of gray soared up.

[Your party member Knight has died.]

“...What?” Kir approximately knew what Mercedes’ and Knight’s skills were like, so he hadn’t expected such results. Unlike what he bragged, he hadn’t thought that Knight would win, just that he would buy more time. However, what was this result?

Kir couldn’t shut his mouth as the landscape turned red. It was the aftermath of the massacre.

“100,000 Army Massacre Sword.”

There were 30 strikes in one second. The strongest energy blades poured down at a speed that couldn’t be pursued by the eyes, damaging Boutian and everyone in the area. Blood soaked the forest.

Chapter 831

These elves had survived Mercedes' and Grids' attacks, and Beniyaru had even endured Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle. The elves had a high defense vitality, unlike their slender bodies which were covered with just a few leaves. They were an upper-level species different from vampires.

However, could they withstand the 100,000 Army Massacre Sword?

[100,000 Army Massacre Sword (Degraded) Lv. 1]

[-Deals 60% of your attack power 30 times to everyone (can't distinguish between friend or foe) in a 10-meter radius.]

It was impossible to confirm. Despite being degraded, the swordsmanship of the Undefeated King that 'slaughtered' 100,000 enemies had a power beyond Pagma's Swordsmanship. There was even the possibility of the black flames exploding when 100,000 Army Massacre Sword was used with the +1 Enlightenment Sword.

So why? Why did Grid use the 100,000 Army Massacre Sword when he wanted to save the elves? It was because he had faith. There was a thimble on Grid's long and thick thumb.

[Elf's Bow Thimble (Made by Pagma)]

[Rating: Legendary]

Durability: 111/111

* Bow attack speed +20% when worn (elves receive double the effect).

* Allows normal attacks or skill attacks to switch to 'target mode' (Three-minute cooldown. The cooldown is halved when used by an elf).

-A legendary item received from Death Knight Povia on the Behen Archipelago!]

It was a fraudulent item that transformed non-targeted skills into targeted skills. However, Grid's brain hadn't been in an active state when he received the thimble. He hadn't recognized the fraudulent nature of the thimble and had only been fascinated with the 100,000 Army Swordsmanship. As such, he had naturally forgotten about the bow thimble.

Consequently, the biggest harvest Grid got from discovering the forest of the world tree was actually realizing the use of the bow thimble. Grid put on the World Tree's Necklace and the bow thimble, then he used the skill.

“100,000 Army Massacre Sword.”

He used a wide-range skill, but only the bodies of the Kir members were blown away from where they were hiding amidst the thousands of elves. Black flames occasionally swept over the elves.

“Kyaaak!”

“Uhh...!”

The basic vitality of the elves' was high enough for them to not die. However, the two or three successive explosions caused the elves to be seriously injured.

“Look. The elves wouldn't die from this much.”

In the end, they would just have to endure it even if it hurt. Grid confirmed the countless gray pillars that rose into the air and used Revolve immediately after 100,000 Army Massacre Sword. Then Arisa's scimitar which aimed at Grid ended up reversing and striking herself in the chest instead. She fell into a stunned state from receiving the great damage and cried out in a trembling voice, “What the hell is this...?”

The black flames were the instant skill which had killed Tarma instantly during the National Competition. Yet how many times did the black flames just explode in a row? Every skill had a

cooldown, and the more powerful the skill, the longer the cooldown would be. Logically, this situation was completely incomprehensible.

Grid asked the confused Arisa, “What do you mean?”

That’s right. Grid didn’t understand Arisa’s question. He didn’t know that Arisa and others had misunderstood the black flames as a skill! Grid’s basic attack struck once at Arisa’s unprotected side. Then he stabbed a second time and a third time.

However, the third strike wasn’t required. Arisa was already seriously damaged from the time she was hit with Revolve, and she turned to gray after Grid’s second blow. A high-level player who couldn’t be harmed by hundreds of 200+ level players had been helpless before Grid’s nonsensical attacks.

Grid wanted to shout, ‘All existences apart from me are equal!’

Knight, who had been hired for millions of gold, and the top members that Kir had fostered were brutally killed, leaving Kir speechless. “Crazy...”

The disaster called ‘Grid’ was something that the 1st ranked merchant and so-called Merchant King was unfamiliar with. Only 34 people survived the bombardment of 100,000 Army Massacre Sword. Having lost their killing intent, they simply stood silently. No one interfered with Grid as he approached Kir.

Everything Kir had done was in vain. The army that he’d built with his hard-earned strength was made to kneel before a one-man army. Grid was an unjust existence for Kir, who lived with the power of money.

‘...Power is imperative.’ Kir realized that he shouldn’t be elated about purchasing one city. The thing he needed was the power to break through the limits of money. ‘The money I invested in a small city could’ve been spent on the emperor.’

Grid wouldn’t have dared be so hostile to him if Kir were under

the aegis of the empire. While Kir was feeling regretful and remorseful, Grid arrived right in front of him and asked, “Is there a demand for elf slaves?”

“Don’t you think it is a merchant’s role to create demand? Why? Do you intend to find the slave buyers and punish them? Is that your justice?”

“I’m not that diligent. I was just wondering how many people take for granted the buying and selling of people?”

“People?” Kir doubted his ears and burst out laughing. “Are you crazy? Are you going to say that the masses of AI are actually people?”

Anger filled Kir’s eyes. “NPCs exist for the convenience and progress of us players. Only players can be called people. Have you forgotten the reality of games after marrying an NPC and giving birth to one? Or is it your wish? Are you one of those madmen who wish to become an NPC so that your wife and child are real?”

In reality, many people fell in love with anime characters television. So, it wasn’t strange that people would fall in love with NPCs who could actually converse, touch, and share emotions.

“Kukuk!” Kir could only laugh. He had been fiercely playing the game in order to fulfill his grand dream of completing his revenge against his father. Meanwhile, a famous ranker had been playing house with NPCs.

“...I can’t acknowledge it.” Kir’s anger exploded. He stared at Grid with murderous eyes and pulled out a heavy bag. Based on the sounds the bag was making, it was clearly full of money. Were there gold coins that weighed around hundreds of kilograms?

“You carry that much money with you? You are the 1st ranked merchant for a reason.” The surprised Grid scoffed. “So what? Will you give me money in order to spare you? Okay. Give it a try. I might spare you depending on the amount.”

He had succeeded in rescuing the elves, and Mercedes was wiping out the remaining members of Kir's Company. Kir was the only one left, so Grid could afford to spare him. He didn't have any personal grudges that made him want to kill Kir, and there was no reason to reject the offer.

However, Kir ridiculed Grid, "You talked about different things, but you are the same as the rest."

In the end, humans wanted money. It was rare for a human to not be greedy. Kir once again remembered this fact.

"Money? If you want it then I'll give it to you!" He shouted and swung the bag full of money toward Grid.

'Is he crazy?'

Was this called an attack? Grid was unfamiliar with the merchant class and saw them as having no combat power. Therefore, this attack seemed meaningless. It was so lame that he couldn't even mock it.

"...!" Grid shook his head and was too surprised when he was about to be hit by Kir's attack. It was because he couldn't avoid Kir's slow move.

[The huge power of gold stimulates your greed.]

[You can't resist. You have been attracted by the gold force.]

'What?' Grid felt a moment of anxiety. Then the heavy money bag struck Grid's face.

[You have suffered 1 damage.]

[The weight of riches is a great law. You can't bear the weight!]

[You have exited from the battlefield!]

Grid's body flew high into the sky and disappeared.

Chapter 832

“Y-Your Majesty!”

What was this? It was an unbelievable sight! Mercedes looked at the sky with a devastated expression. Then Kir urged her, “Your Majesty? Are you referring to Grid? Then you should hurry. Isn’t it dangerous to be alone this deep in the forest?”

“Kuk!” There was nothing more important than her master’s safety. Mercedes looked at the elves and then at the ugly Kir before leaving without hesitation. She ran in the direction that Grid had flown to. It was only after she had left completely that Kir revealed his desperate situation. “Another unexpected expenditure...”

[Flying Money]

[-Hits the target and blows them away. It applies to everyone that can’t resist the smell of money, except a certain species.

It inflicts 1 damage to the target and blows the target 3 kilometers away.

Skill Resource Consumption: Gold in proportion to the target’s level and attack power will be consumed. The skill won’t activate if there isn’t enough gold.

Skill Cooldown Time: None.]

Flying Money was a survival skill that only a third advancement merchant could acquire. Since there were only two merchants who had acquired their third advancement class, there were only a few people who knew the identity of this skill. This meant people didn’t know much about the skill, and even Kir couldn’t grasp it accurately.

Why? That was because he’d never used it before! As a result, he confirmed that it was a very powerful skill that guaranteed a high survival rate.

“...430,000 gold was blown away.”

An absurd amount of money was consumed. Kir expected the spending to be great considering the effect of the skill, but he hadn't expected it to be so big. When he saw that his number of gold had sharply decreased, Kir trembled. The operation to capture the elves had failed because of Grid, and Kir was forced to give up ownership of the world tree. This resulted in a total loss of 40.43 million gold, which was worth more than 48.5 billion won. The loss was so large that it was hard for Kir to bear.

“Dammit...! Dammit!!”

The merchant's ranking wasn't simply calculated based on level. It was also based on completed transactions and the total number of assets. Due to this incident, Kir would lose the title of 1st in the merchant rankings as well as many things he had enjoyed in the meantime. The expression in his eyes turned dark, and he felt suffocated as his body trembled.

“Hrmm, this is great.” Beniyaru laughed at the angry Kir.

It was natural for Kir's anger to turn to her. “You! It is because you cried out for help!” Kir kicked Beniyaru's face many times. He spat on her and then forced her onto his horse. “I will sell you for an expensive price.”

“Beniyaru!”

The elves tried to stop Kir, but it was impossible. Having been poisoned by the Yatan Essence, they couldn't even move their fingertips. Kir was about to leave with Beniyaru when he shouted, “Knight Summoning!”

Three knights were summoned. They were named NPCs that Kir was proud of. Kir gave an order to the best knights that ordinary players couldn't go against. “One minute. Kill as many elves as you can in one minute. Then take a few back to the city.”

“Yes!”

A deep grudge settled in Kir's heart as he sat behind Beniyaru and rode in the opposite direction of Grid's flight.

'Grid! I will make you regret your actions today for the rest of your life!'

The screams of the elves rang through the forest behind him.

"..." Darkness filled Beniyaru's empty eyes.

"..." Grid didn't know where this place was. After being hit by a bag of money and flying a few kilometers away, he laid on the ground for a while. However, he recovered within a short span of time and got up.

"Wow, isn't this absurd?"

The power of gold that couldn't be resisted...? He never imagined that there would be this type of skill. If he had known that a merchant had such a dangerous skill, Grid wouldn't have spared Kir.

'I didn't think it would be so annoying.'

Grid was aware that Kir had left the battlefield at the beginning of the battle, but Grid hadn't gone after him. It had been a conscious decision to not place Kir into the range of 100,000 Army Massacre Sword. Why? It was because Grid had been confident that he could easily deal with a merchant who didn't have a separate escape route. However...

'Dammit.'

Having too much confidence was terrible. Grid felt the need to study.

'I should collect as much information as possible about relatively unfamiliar classes and be aware of their characteristics.'

Would there ever be an end to this studying? Grid's pledge might be useless considering the countless classes available in Satisfy.

However, Grid was confident that he wouldn't regret it. He believed that he could do it without giving up. At the same time, he reflected on himself.

'I should've used Mercedes more aggressively.'

He should've ordered Mercedes to watch Kir in order to grasp some of his skills and abilities. There was a low probability that she could've detected the Flying Money skill and then allowed him to avoid it.

'I've obtained a legendary knight, but I haven't been using her properly. Tsk.'

The problem wasn't a dumb brain. This incident was caused by excessive confidence. Grid had believed himself to be a top player while Kir was an insignificant enemy. Therefore, he had been careless. Grid had failed to maintain his concentration and ended up missing things.

'Well, everything is an experience.'

He put on Braham's Boots and started flying. There was no nervousness about the fact that Mercedes and the elves were left alone as he believed in Mercedes. Grid flew back to his original location. He smiled as he overcame all the obstacles in the forest using the advantage of flying.

'Kir, you stupid bastard.'

What did he intend by blowing Grid away? Mercedes still remained behind. She would take care of the remaining members of Kir's Company and rescue the elves.

'I hope that Kir is still alive.'

Then Grid could take his money. It hadn't been out of 'general consideration' that Grid had listened to Kir's uncomfortable nonsense from beginning to end. He'd done so out of patience to gain the maximum advantages. Grid intended to gain money by bargaining with a 'merchant' who was afraid for his life, giving Kir

hope for his future. What if Grid didn't get as much wealth as he wanted? Then he would just go ahead and kill Kir. From Kir's point of view, he would be forced to feel desperate.

'There is still hope. Mercedes might've saved his life. Um...?' Grid became confused and stood in place.

It was because he saw Mercedes running toward him from a distance. "Your Majesty! Are you okay?"

"What?"

This was an unexpected encounter! Grid was confused for a bit and then smacked his lips together with regret. "Did you already kill Kir?"

"Huh...? No, I was worried about your safety and immediately followed."

"What?" Grid narrowed the distance towards her. Mercedes was surprised since Grid had only shown her a gentle appearance after acquiring her. Grid asked, "Are you that bad? You let go of the enemies that needed to be kept and the targets to be protected?"

"...I'm sorry." Mercedes wanted to refute it. However, a knight couldn't give excuses to their master.

Grid flew up again while speaking to the silently bowing Mercedes, "Well? Return to the front line immediately!"

"Yes!"

Grid no longer rebuked Mercedes. If he looked at it from the perspective of a knight that should consider the safety of their master as the top priority, he understood why she had run while leaving Kir and the elves alone. Mercedes' master had been attacked by the enemy and had disappeared before her eyes. Had there been room to think about anything else? It was natural that she would chase after Grid, disregarding Kir and the elves. After all, her duty was to protect Grid, not the elves.

However, it was regrettable. What if Mercedes were a player? They would be able to respond flexibly to the situation by sending a whisper to Grid or by checking the health gauge in the party window.

‘It is a limitation of an NPC.’ Grid felt strange whenever he remembered that players and NPCs were different from each other. In particular, his heart throbbed when he thought about Irene. Trying to shake off his thoughts, Grid’s shout was louder than usual, “Knight Summoning!”

‘I don’t need to summon Piaro or Asmophel.’

It was a burden to summon Asmophel, who was traveling all over the continent to find the Red Knights. Meanwhile, Piaro would have to return to the vampire city all over again. In the first place, Grid wanted the knights with high mobility since it was to track down Kir who had already run away!

“Huroi! Faker!”

[The summoning command has been sent. The response is pending.]

[The targets have accepted the summons.]

[The knights Huroi and Faker have been summoned.]

“This is Huroi! I have come in response to Your Majesty’s call!”

“What's going on?”

Huroi and Faker immediately appeared in response to Grid’s call.

“Merchant King Kir is somewhere in this forest. He couldn’t have gone too far. Find him now and bring him before me.”

Orator Huroi had a wyvern, so he was able to see the entire forest from the sky and demonstrate an excellent maneuverability. Meanwhile, Faker was an assassin who had excellent tracking abilities.

“Yes!”

“I understand.”

Both of them replied confidently. They had no idea what was going on, but they noticed the urgency of the situation and immediately took action.

A few minutes after they left.

“...Ah.”

“...”

Grid and Mercedes arrived at the place where the elves had been. The number of elves making frightened expressions had obviously been reduced. More than 100 elves had disappeared in the short time they had been gone. Beniyaru couldn't be seen either. Grid had an ominous feeling. He took several deep breaths to empty his mind of the terrible sight and approached a young elf.

Then he released her bound wrists and ankles and asked, “What happened?”

“Sob.” The elf couldn't speak and just shook her head with a frightened expression. She was obviously afraid of Grid and humans.

“I'm sorry... I'm sorry, Your Majesty.” Mercedes bowed deeply, believing the terrible events of this day had been caused by her. She felt sad because the trust Grid had built up with the elves collapsed due to her not being able to cope flexibly.

Grid's voice entered her ears, “No. It isn't your fault. Kir is the one in the wrong. In the end, I crossed a river that can't be reversed.”

Grid felt a strong hostility and disgust toward Kir who had tried to enslave the elves using the excuse that they were just NPCs with an artificial intelligence. However, he knew that most people, not just Kir, perceived NPCs as bits of artificial intelligences or chunks of graphics. Just looking at the Overgeared members, weren't there also players who didn't recognize NPCs as people?

There was no reason to waste energy by imposing notions of respect and affection on Kir. He was just a bastard that money could be obtained from. Of course, that was until a few minutes ago. Now, the situation had changed. Grid took several deep breaths in an effort to calm his mind.

No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't calm down. He had witnessed countless terrible and miserable things in the past, but why was it that he couldn't adapt every time? Grid's eyes were cold, and his hands trembled as he released some of the frightened elves while sending a whisper to Lauel.

-Grid: The city of Merchant King Kir. What kingdom is it in?

-Lauel: The Gauss Kingdom

-Grid: If we invade the city, does it count as invading the Gauss Kingdom?

-Lauel: Of course. There is a high probability that a diplomatic problem could lead to war.

Lauel didn't ask what happened. He had sent a whisper to Huroi after the summoning and gotten a glimpse of Grid's current situation.

-Lauel: My role in this life is to realize Your Majesty's will. Don't worry about anything.

-Grid: ...

-Lauel: Since Mercedes' arrival, the power of the Overgeared Kingdom has clearly exceeded the Gauss Kingdom. They can't defeat us even if a war takes place. Of course, there is room for other countries to intervene.

There were no small countries that wanted the Overgeared Kingdom to expand its power. It was likely that an alliance of small countries would form, and the Overgeared Kingdom would suffer a great crisis. However, Lauel didn't say this. After all, Grid was the strongest player. Lauel couldn't possibly constrain him under the

reins of ‘responsibility’ when he was spreading his wings.

Lauel was thinking from Grid’s position. How frustrated would he feel if he were suppressed by the guild and kingdom that he had built up with his own efforts? He wouldn’t feel strong but doubtful of himself instead. This was the time to release Grid’s desires.

-Lauel: Please give the command. I will summon an army to trample on Kir’s city and burn it.

-Grid: Is there a need to move the army?

-Lauel: Huh?

Lauel didn’t know about the Divinity and Astaroth’s Power which Grid had acquired recently. A wicked smile appeared on Grid’s face.

-Grid: Leave the army. I will go alone.

However, he had work to do before that. He had to chase Kir down and save the kidnapped elves.

“Mercedes.”

“Yes!”

“Release the elves here and protect them.”

“I understand.” Mercedes was given an order, so she couldn’t tell him that she didn’t want him to go alone. She wasn’t stupid enough to make the same mistakes. Instead, Mercedes believed in the power of her master because this was what he wanted.

Grid received a new whisper.

-Faker: I’ve found a party moving with dozens of kidnapped elves. However, Kir isn’t here.

-Grid: There was another party left? Yes, it would be impossible for Kir to kidnap or harm over a hundred elves in such a short time alone.

Grid realized that Kir had likely summoned his knights. This was

natural since Kir was a baron.

-Grid: Okay.

This was fine. He would handle all of Kir's knights. A dark smile appeared on Grid's face. It was evil enough to surprise Mercedes.

-Grid: Let me know their locations. Additionally, keep track of Kir.

Faker's biggest advantage was that he didn't talk a lot. He accepted his role without expressing any opinions. However, it wasn't the case this time.

Faker: I am two kilometers northwest of the point where I was summoned. Be careful. There are three people, and they are all named-grade NPCs. Depending on the situation, I will stop tracking Kir and join you.

-Grid: Needing to join me... That won't happen.

'Won't he be blind with anger right now?' Kir laughed. He felt great pleasure at the fury Grid would feel when he witnessed the deaths of the elves. Of course, this was only for a moment. Kir remembered that he had lost close to 50 billion won in one day and soon forgot about this slight joy.

"You dog bastard!" Kir let out a curse.

From his perspective, Grid was the scum of the earth. This was natural as Grid was the person who had ruined Kir's business company just for the sake of helping NPCs. Grid was a disruptive character that was difficult to understand.

'He is almost at the level of a psychopath.'

Kir thought about it and recalled his past. How many weak people had he trampled on? He had directly and indirectly taken advantage of many people as he climbed to 1st on the merchant rankings. However, he had justified his evil deeds under the guise

of getting revenge on his father.

‘...In the end, I am the same.’ He regained his sense of reason. Looking over at the wounded Beniyaru, Kir belatedly realized something. As he saw the poison in her heart again, Kir warned Beniyaru, “There is no hope. You can’t go back anymore. Just accept reality.”

It was also a warning to himself. Kir controlled the poison in his heart. Then he heard a great noise from above. It was a loud roar.

‘A wyvern?’ Was there a wyvern habitat here?

Kir looked up and saw a red wyvern in the sky above the forest. The wyvern descended with a terrifying momentum and landed on the ground. It blocked Kir’s way and he was forced to stop his horse.

“This is...!”

Why had a wyvern suddenly appeared and blocked his path? Kir was as stiff as a stone statue when he finally noticed that a person was riding on the back of the wyvern. The person’s identity was Huroi. Huroi came down from the wyvern and asked Kir a question, “Did your parents die recently?”

“How did you know?”

“...”

Kir and Huroi were both upset by this, but the one who first recovered his spirit was Huroi. Huroi coughed and made a serious expression, as if his previous words had never been said. “Hoh! You are very bad! You are a terrible person who has gone astray and caused your wonderful and precious parents to feel shocked and sorrowful!”

“What?”

Why was this person suddenly talking about a stranger’s dead parents? From Kir’s perspective, Grid, Huroi, and the Overgeared

members were all terrible villains.

Chapter 833

-Huroi: Your Majesty! I've found that damn bastard!

-Grid: That damn bastard? Do you mean Kir?

-Huroi: Yes!

-Grid: Good. Faker, join Huroi right now. I will follow after rescuing the elves.

-Faker: I understand. But as I said, be careful.

Players like Grid who didn't have a lot of dependence on pets were rare. Pets boasted different characteristics depending on their species, attribute, sex, level, and so on. Most ordinary players felt the limits of their individual strength and were forced to rely on pets.

As a result, the levels of their pets were naturally high. The flames emitted from the level 300 Lord of the Skies above the Grasslands, which had been active since Huroi's early days, was enough to threaten Kir.

[You have suffered 9,700 damage!]

[You have been burned! You will receive 1,330 burn damage per second.]

"Kuuack!" Kir was swept up by the flames and struggled with the pain.

His legendary armor, jewelry, and items received terrible damage. Additionally, his defense and resistance were lower after being affected by Huroi's Spiteful Tongue. Kir couldn't escape receiving serious injuries despite having proudly declared that he was the most overgeared person after Grid.

'I have no chance!' Kir's judgment was quick. Who was Huroi? He wasn't a simple orator. As the first player to obtain a second class, Huroi was also a swordsman. When combined with the

strength of a wyvern, he was as strong as a high ranker. It was natural for Kir to consider retreating when he was a merchant with no combat power apart from Flying Money. However, it was difficult for him to escape.

“You are a bastard that your parents would be ashamed of!”

“You jerk!”

[You have been provoked!]

Kir was thinking about running away only to stop in place. Huroi's taunt skill was stronger than his sense of reason and instincts. It was impossible for an NPC or player to stand up to the system. Grid's Longsword, which was completely different from the mass-produced longsword, stabbed deeply into Kir's side.

However, Kir had a legendary-rated armor and wasn't damaged by Huroi's attack. As soon as the duration of the taunt was over, Kir drank a potion and cried out bluntly, “I am Merchant King Kir! I can't be easily hurt by rabble like you!”

Huroi might be a high ranker, but he wasn't tough in comparison to Overgeared King Grid! Kir had used a large number of gold coins to blow Grid away, but he didn't feel the necessity of using Flying Money on Huroi. In fact, he thought it would be a waste to use money on Huroi.

The wyvern's strong flames were his only source of worry. The wyvern seemed to cry out, ‘If you want to live, give me money!’

‘No! I can't afford any more spending!’

Shit, how good would it be if he could summon his knights at this time? Kir only owned three knights, but he had already summoned all of them a few minutes ago. The cooldown time meant it was impossible to summon them again right away. Feelings of regret surged inside him about how he had summoned the knights to slaughter the elves just to get petty revenge on Grid!

The wyvern's breath turned the forest into a sea of fire, and Kir

barely evaded it on his horse. The bushes and thorns obstructed Kir's vision as his white horse broke through trees and rocks. Huroi's eyes widened, finally noticing a small white horn on the horse's forehead. "A unicorn?"

The size of the horn was small enough for the unicorn to be mistaken as a horse. Based on the size of the horn, it wasn't an adult yet. However, even a baby unicorn had astronomical value. As far as Huroi knew, only a few NPCs who were royalty possessed unicorns.

"The rich are truly different!" Huroi got back on his wyvern and hurriedly chased after Kir, with Faker joining him after a moment.

Kir felt a great threat as there were people chasing him on the ground and in the sky.

'Why... Why do I have to suffer like this?' Revealed between the gaps in his matted hair, Kir's eyes were filled with anger and fear. It was a shabby appearance. The majesty of the Merchant King—who boasted the highest reputation after Grid, Kraugel, Agnus, Ares, and so on—was long gone.

"This is a really unpleasant mission." Banus, one of Kir's knights, was complaining.

Beside him were 20 elves tied together. His mission was to massacre and kidnap women who couldn't resist. Even if they were a different species, the mission from Master Kir upset Banus. To be honest, Banus' pride was pricked. It felt disgusting that a big person like him would have to perform the same duty as a third-rate bandit.

'I picked the wrong master.'

His master, Kir, had promised him enormous wealth and honor. What was the biggest honor for a warrior? It was to win a fight against famous and strong people. Yes, this was what Kir had

promised. According to Kir, Banus would get to fight countless giants. Every day would be fun. However, this was the reality.

“Tch.” Banus walked while swinging the whip that he held. It was to rush the elves who were walking slowly because they didn’t want to leave the forest.

“Ouch!” The elves moaned as their health decreased noticeably. It was completely different from when the members of Kir’s Company had hit the elves. This was an indirect glimpse of Banus’ strength. Banus warned the elves, “Don’t act silly and I won’t touch you. This is good for both of us.”

“Where are the other knights and elves?” At this time, a black-haired man fell from the sky and blocked Banus’ path.

Banus saw the man’s eyes that were as sharp as a bird and asked, “Overgeared King?”

As a mercenary, Banus longed for money and sought battlefields throughout the continent. He had been employed by the former Eternal Kingdom before serving Kir. The opponent in that war had been the Overgeared Guild. Banus couldn’t forget the exhilarating experience from that time. Was Toban the name of the dark-skinned paladin? Banus was still thrilled when he recalled the battle with whom he believed was the strongest warrior in the Overgeared Guild. He didn’t forget falling down after a one-hour-long battle, but Banus was confident. If he hadn’t caught the ankle of the Overgeared warrior, the former Eternal Kingdom would’ve been occupied by the Overgeared Guild much faster.

“Kuk! Kukukuk! That’s right! So, my master was running away from you?” Banus’ huge muscles started to swell. The force that could crush a man’s head burned heartily.

“I took a peek at your performance in the war from the distance. You swept through thousands of soldiers. Huhut, okay... This is very exciting! Thank you! Thank you for showing up in front of me!” Banus roared and rushed toward Grid without hesitation.

His muscles, which were trained to not be cut by a spear and had blocked a sword from the strongest warrior Toban, were combined with the defense of the legendary armor Kir had given him. With these, Banus dealt a vigorous blow to Grid.

“Ugh?” However, Banus suffered pain for the first time in decades. He was bewildered, but he endured with his physical strength, pushing his fist deeper into Grid’s chest. His swollen fist contained an ogre’s strength and had even dealt significant damage to Toban, the strongest of Overgeared warriors. Combined with his legendary-rated knuckles, Banus delivered an impact to Grid’s armor.

“W-What?” Banus felt like he was dreaming. His fist couldn’t even scratch the armor? No, the armor wasn’t the problem. In the first place, armor was designed to defend against attacks. Banus found it hard to believe that Grid could maintain his posture and not fly away from the weight behind the first.

“Is this the strength of a legend? I knew you would be stronger than Toban but I didn’t realize it was by this much...” Banus was amazed and excited at the same time. “This is the first time since a solo number knight that I am actually forced to use this power!” Banus screamed, and the mana around him stirred.

As the injury on Grid healed, Banus’ already swollen muscles swelled up even further. In particular, his right forearm was now thicker than an ogre’s forearm.

“From now on, it is the real battle!” Banus roared with extreme excitement. Confidence overflowed on his face as he used his ultimate technique which had inflicted serious damage onto the Ninth Red Knight. That’s right. The people who believed themselves to be the strongest were always filled with confidence... until they were hit by Grid!

“Revolve.”

“Keok!”

He was hit by his own fist...? This was an unfamiliar experience for Banus, who fell down while coughing up blood. Then Grid's sword arrived at Banus' neck.

"Where did the other two knights and the elves go?" Grid asked without expecting an answer. He honestly admired Banus' high defense and high attack power, which had penetrated Grid's defense. However, a named NPC with such high loyalty would rather choose to die than to answer. In fact, didn't all the NPCs that served Grid boast high loyalty? Well, apart from Minor.

Unexpectedly, Banus answered in a hearty manner, "You will be able to meet them if you just go straight ahead. I just slowed down the march because I dislike being with them."

"..." Grid was confused as he hadn't expected Banus would answer so earnestly.

He was hesitating when Banus revealed his throat. "Well? Kill me."

"..."

"Um? What are you waiting for? Didn't you kill tens of thousands of people during the Eternal War? Go on and kill me. For a warrior, being defeated is no different than death. There is no point in living anymore."

"...Yes." Grid originally intended to get rid of all of Kir's knights. He planned to take everything away from Kir. It was funny that he was hesitating now because he felt a slight affinity after seeing Banus' skills and attitude. In the end, Banus advised Grid who was raising his sword, "The strongest warrior who defeated me. The other two knights you are chasing are completely different types of monsters. You should be vigilant. Kukuk."

Banus turned to gray, leaving behind his knuckles. They were legendary-rated knuckles. Their performance was greatly inferior compared to the items Grid made, but they could be melted down

and used as a material. Grid grabbed the knuckles and released the elves. “Go back to the previous place. Your family and friends will be waiting.”

“That...” One scared elf opened her mouth. Her name was Deruyaru. She was a beautiful girl reminiscent of a rabbit due to her round cheeks and big eyes. “I am one of the 12 Te. The Deru family... I want to thank you on behalf of my people.”

“You can say it later.”

He hadn't saved everyone yet. Grid left Deruyaru and the elves behind him as he ran in the direction that Banus had indicated.

“Noe, Randy. Can you Become the King of the Dead?”

Respecting the various warnings, Grid fully prepared for the worst.

Chapter 834

“Pant! Pant! Pant! Cough...!”

No matter how much Kir ran, he couldn't see the end. The forest, which he had believed to be a treasure warehouse, was now more terrible than hell. The beautiful flowers and trees, the fresh air, and the sweet fragrance of fruit all seemed like a deceitful curse. There were constant questions in Kir's head as he swallowed a potion and checked his stamina gauge.

How had this happened? Why had he met Grid? Why had Grid become hostile to him? Was it that big a deal that he had enslaved the elves? Why did he have to experience this pain? Maybe Grid had planned this entire situation?

‘Was I dancing on Grid's palm?’

When on earth had he started planning this? Had it been since Kir started investigating the forest of the world tree?

“Ugh..!” The huge shadow on the ground made Kir's heart throb. He felt an infinite pressure as Huroi's wyvern flew above his head.

“Pero! Avoid it!”

The white horse—no, the unicorn jumped sideways like a crab at Kir's command. These movements weren't possible for a normal horse. The flames emitted by the wyvern moved straight ahead and would've completely burned the spot where they had been traveling.

Kir followed the path of fire to the left and gulped. ‘A wyvern doesn't have infinite mana.’

The wyvern had a limit of one or two more flame breaths left. Meanwhile, the unicorn, which was classified as one of the highest-rated rides, could use its evasion skill dozens more times. The unicorn's basic mana far exceeded that of the drake!

‘I will live!’

Kir didn’t have time to resent the past or worry about the future. The present was more important. He didn’t want to face the worst experience of losing a large amount of experience and items by dying.

‘Somehow! I have to somehow make it back to my city!’

He would pay back the loss and shame of today by several times! Kir made this promise because he had something to believe in—the presence of his three knights.

Form King Banus, Dark King Dias, and Eating God Phou were the strongest people Kir recruited as he wandered around the continent as a merchant. Named NPCs were stronger than the Overgeared members at the moment, especially Grid and Kraugel. Kir knew this right after seeing Piaro play an overwhelming role during the Belial raid.

As such, Kir was certain that if he invested another year and concentrated on raising these three knights, they would be reborn again as knights who were stronger than Piaro!

‘The possibilities are endless! They haven’t developed yet but they’re the ones with the nicknames of ‘king’ and ‘god’.

Just as Kir was praised as the Merchant King, Banus, Dias, and Phou were already called kings or gods by the local NPCs when Kir first met them. They were so powerful that they exceeded the category of a player and had the unlimited potential of named NPCs. It was no wonder that Kir had high expectations for them.

‘If I escape safely, it is very likely that the Overgeared Guild will invade the city. I will ask for support from the Gauss Kingdom, defend with my three knights, and then move to the empire...’

Kir started smiling as he planned it out. The Overgeared Guild’s invasion was likely to be very beneficial for him.

Firstly, it was possible to make the Gauss Kingdom and

Overgeared Kingdom completely hostile to each other. Then he would be able to shift public opinion of the Overgeared Kingdom to a negative one for invading another country, and he would also be able to create an alliance with the other countries that were anxious. It was a bonus that he would be able to move into the empire without fearing the Overgeared Kingdom.

‘I don’t like that the First Knight is with Grid.’

However, it shouldn’t be a big factor considering the emperor’s ambition of unifying the continent. Kir made this judgment as his body moved upward. It was because the unicorn carrying him jumped randomly. Kir soon figured out the reason why. There was a sword energy at the unicorn’s feet. If the unicorn had jumped a bit later, its legs would have been cut off.

‘This is ridiculous!’

To think that Huroi had swooped down fast enough to catch up with the unicorn’s speed and wield his sword...! Even if he was a ranker, wasn’t he an orator? Kir wasn’t convinced of this, and he looked back. Then his trembling eyes saw the source of the attack.

“Faker!!”

That Grid had pulled out his strongest card! A chill went down Kir’s spine. While growing to become the Merchant King, Kir’s greatest strength had been his information network. In the ‘player rating’ table that he’d made using his extensive intelligence, Faker’s power was S-class. It was just behind players like Grid, Kraugel, Agnus, and Haster. He was comparable to the top players when it came to killing power alone. They were both high rankers but Faker had a completely different force in comparison to the B-class Huroi.

‘This can’t be!’

Kir knew he wouldn’t be able to hold out after becoming Faker’s target and urgently shouted, “Pero! Use Brilliant Sprint!”

The body of the unicorn was then covered with a pure white light, and it disappeared from its location. To be precise, the unicorn made an extremely quick movement. It was a major skill that consumed most of the unicorn's mana.

Faker looked beyond the forest as he was left alone. "Do you think you can get away?" Then Faker also disappeared from his position.

Huroi watched the two people from above and stroked his jaw. The wyvern flew in the sky as Huroi gave a soliloquy, "A unicorn... It would suit Master."

Black smoke rose up from the forest.

In the forest of the world tree, Dias frowned when Phou said like a fool, "Hungry..."

The elves being dragged behind them had terrified expressions. They trembled because they had already witnessed the terrible scene that occurred every time Phou said he was hungry, and fear poured in like the tide. Dias scolded Phou, "Didn't you just eat? They aren't your food. They are Master's goods."

"Hungry..." Phou lost his intelligence when he became hungry and only cared about his stomach. It would be pointless to say anything to Phou.

"Sigh, do whatever you want." Dias raised his hands. He didn't have any authority or power over Phou and was quick to give up.

"N-No...!" The elves turned deathly pale as Dias retreated. Tears filled their eyes, but Phou just stared at them with saliva dripping.

"Haaap!"

The fate of the elf Phou snatched up was terrible. She was swallowed by Phou and turned to grey.

Gulp! A man had just devoured a female elf that was 170

centimeters tall, yet there was no glimpse of satisfaction on his face as he burped. His meal wasn't over yet.

It was a horrible disaster for the elves, of whom there were only 30 left. However, the elves no longer cried or begged. They had gone insane from witnessing the gruesome sight of their family and friends being eaten several times. Now, they couldn't even feel fear.

“Hungry...”

One of the elves didn't resist as Phou's large hand caressed her body. Then it happened when Phou opened his mouth and tried to swallow her. Four golden hands flew forth and swung their hammers. The hammers struck Phou's large neck and thick biceps in rapid succession.

Additionally, a furry cat moved his short and chubby legs and then shot out like a lightning bolt toward Phou. “Lightning Discharge~! Discharge, nyong!”

“What are you doing?” Grid showed up next. His cloak flapped as he danced. There was a killing intent in his eyes as he stared at Phou.

“Kill!” Grid screamed as he swung the Enlightenment Sword. He was convinced that his enemy would become stiff from being hit by Mjolnir four times in succession, as well as Noe's lightning. Additionally, Grid thought Phou would stop eating the elf and that his unprotected flesh would be hit by Kill.

Gulp!

However, unlike what Grid had expected, Phou resisted the stiffness and electric shock. Instead, he swallowed the elf, who was making a hopeful expression, and then hit Grid's Kill with his palm.

[The skill has been neutralized.]

“What?”

Phou had a defense that neutralized a legendary skill? Moreover, it was just by using his bare hands? No, how did he resist the stiffness and electric shock in the first place? Grid was making a shocked expression when Phou headbutted him.

“I don’t know who you are, but I’m sorry.” Dias shook his head. He didn’t doubt that the black-haired man would be beaten by the three-meter-tall Phou. However, Dias was mistaken.

“...”

The black-haired man was fine. One of the golden hands flew up and blocked Phou’s strike. The golden hand shook and stiffened, while Grid’s burning eyes peered over the golden hand at Phou.

“You pig-like dog!”

A dog and a pig, what was this? Dias scratched his head with confusion.

“Pagma’s Swordsmanship!”

‘Pagma?’

“Wave!” Grid drew a dark red half-moon with his sword. Simultaneously, a wave of energy emerged and hit Phou.

[You have dealt 28,310 damage to the target!]

[Decreases all speeds of the target.]

[The target has resisted.]

‘Slow resistance?’

Phou’s health was also high. There was no change in his health gauge despite receiving almost 30,000 damage.

‘His defense is relatively normal and his basic speed is slow...’

Grid wore the Slaughterer’s Eye Patch and was surprised when he looked at Phou. It was because Phou’s palm, which was three times bigger than Grid, was flying toward him. It would’ve been a disaster if the God Hands hadn’t responded right then as Phou was

faster than suggested by his size. Additionally, after eating the two elves, Phou's mild-looking eyes were now wild. He was baffled and angry by Grid's iron-like defense.

"These hands... Phou's attack... stop..." Phou firmly grasped a God Hand, placed it in his mouth, and tried to swallow it. However, he felt an instinctive rejection.

Dias led the elves away. "Since you used Pagma's Swordsmanship, are you the famous Overgeared King? But are you Phou's opponent? That guy is a monster born between a giant and a troll king. Even a transcendent human can't hurt him."

Phou's abdominal wound, which had been caused by Wave, was already recovering. His recovery power was similar to that of a troll. Phou's face reddened, and he roared angrily, "Phou! Monster! Nooooooooooo!"

The dozens of elves, Randy, the Overgeared Skeletons who arrived late on the scene, and even Dias stumbled at the roar. The power of Giant's Roar took away the strength in their legs.

"Divinity. Item Combination." On the other hand, Grid was fine.

[Belial's Staff and the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires will be combined!]

Flash! The Enlightenment Sword and Belial's Staff were engulfed in light and combined into one.

Grid soon swung a spear-like weapon. Thanks to the options produced by combining the items, the black flames and red lightning bolt were classified as magic. The magic damage was increased by 20% and the critical damage was increased by 150%. This was enough to threaten Phou's high health.

Phou's health gauge decreased noticeably as he struggled with the pain. Then what about Grid?

[A shield with 5,000 health has been created due to the effect of Belial's Shield.]

[A shield with 5,000 health has been created due to the effect of Belial's Shield.]

[A shield with 5,000 health has been created due to the effect...]

.....

.....

Many overlapping black shields started rotating around him. It was a contrast to the growing number of wounds on Phou.

“Hurts! It huuuuurts!” The expression in Phou's eyes turned crazy, and his fists struck the shields surrounding Grid in succession. However, this was poison to Phou.

[You have suffered 9,700 damage!]

[The shield will absorb damage.]

[You have suffered 10,300 damage!]

[The shield will absorb damage.]

[The target who attacked you is in the 'fear' state. The 'slowness' has been resisted.]

Grid avoided a loss of health thanks to the shield while Phou lost his momentum.

“H-Hik! Phou... Phou is afraid...!”

That's right. Phou was a strong person, who was comparable to Piaro during the time of the Belial raid. He could resist many types of status conditions, but he wasn't a legend nor was he immune to all status conditions. Phou was vulnerable to feeling frightened. On the other hand, Grid was several times stronger than he had been during the Belial raid. Yes, he was currently much stronger than Piaro had been at that time!

“Blacksmith's Rage, Blackening.” Grid turned in a semicircle and pulled out his maximum force. He pierced Phou's bloated stomach with an invincible spear. “Knight Summoning! Jishuka, Regas,

Chris, Pon, and Jude!”

Why did he bother calling them in a situation where he was winning? It was to make sure the job was finished cleanly. He had no more room to feel relaxed. Grid cut Phou once again and commanded the five knights who appeared, “Kill that bastard! Save the elves!”

The ‘bastard’ he was referring to was Dias. All five knights seemed tough, so Dias was forced to shrink back in fear. Grid showed that he was far superior to Kir in every way!

Chapter 835

“Lauel put us on hold, and you really summoned us. We roughly know the situation,” a tanned beauty holding a bow spoke up. She drew three arrows which flickered with flames that were as gorgeous as her big lips and wavy hair.

“Leave the small fries to us.” Jishuka smiled confidently and unleashed archery close to a godly archer. The three flaming arrows were shot without a time difference and arrived precisely at the middle of Dias’ eyes, brows, and heart.

Dias and the dozens of elves he’d captured were surprised.

‘To think that a person who isn’t an elf is capable of this sort of archery?’

The arrows shot like beams of light and exploded the moment they hit, dealing Dias with deep wounds. Dias flew back, but Chris rushed to the wide open Dias and swung his greatsword.

“Daring to hit Grid without permission!!” Chris thought that everything should have a process. If someone was going to challenge King Grid, they had to demonstrate their qualification by going through Chris first! Chris’ greatsword struck Dias! Following this, Dias continued to suffer great damage as he was hit by Regas and Pon. The intense skills made Dias feel dizzy.

“Jude. Hit.” Then the finishing blow came from Jude, whose attack aimed at the ragged Dias. However, it only cut the air.

“...???” What was this sudden trolling? The group was stunned because they had expected Jude to finish off Dias.

Chris acted on behalf of Jude. “1,000 ton Sword!”

It was a heavy blow! Then Dias started turning gray.

“What is this?” The party paused as they were heading to support Grid. It was because they didn’t receive messages about Dias’

death, as well as the experience and dropped items.

‘What?’ The party was confused. Jude was the only one who was untroubled and didn’t look surprised. Then a voice rang out from behind Jishuka. It was the voice of the supposedly dead Dias, who had reappeared without a single wound and shook his head. “I guess Master caused a terrible incident. I told him to stop but he touched a lion’s nose. Tsk!”

Chris hurriedly exclaimed, “Jishuka! Avoid it!”

However, it was too late. Dias’ black hand penetrated Jishuka’s armor, tearing at her skin and muscles.

[You have suffered 12,390 damage!]

[You are affected by black magic. Your pain is maximized.]

[You have suffered a further 5,700 damage!]

[The recovery of all resources has slowed. Defense and resistance have dropped. Skills and magic can’t be used for 3 seconds!]

The attack was strong.

“Cough!” Jishuka became alarmed as she was stabbed and severely injured.

‘Grid dealt with these monsters alone?’

This was a natural misunderstanding! Dias opened the distance again as Regas’ late kick and Pon’s stab burst into the air instead of hitting him. He narrowly avoided their attacks in a breathtaking manner! Letting out an exaggerated sigh of relief, Dias looked at Phou and Grid. “It’s ruined. No matter how I looked at it, there is no chance of turning this around.”

The Overgeared King and his knights were better than rumored. This situation was dangerous for him to face just by himself. So, Dias made a judgment. It might be possible in a one-on-one fight against Grid or his knights, but it was impossible to go against them all. In particular, the stupid-looking knight with a silly

expression was a problem. “Jude. Kill.”

‘My illusion magic doesn’t work on him. Is his stupid expression mocking me?’ Dias blocked the greatsword that aimed at him. He couldn’t cope with the weight of the sword and hurriedly withdrew his arm, while Jude kept turning left and right.

“Kuock!”

Jude’s power was incredible! Dias’ illusion was shaken from side to side and removed.

“He’s there!”

The gazes of the other members, which were in a completely different direction from Jude, shifted to Dias’ body at once. Dias was frustrated. “I didn’t think my illusion would be broken so soon.”

It was the first time he had ever experienced this. Dias had played an active role in the Violet Kingdom and faced countless powerful players, but he had never experienced such a grave crisis. He saw Jude as a transcendent person. “You are the Overgeared King’s first knight for a reason.”

“Jude. His Majesty’s first knight!” Jude’s greatsword didn’t stop for even a moment as he continued to corner Dias. Jude had been growing ever since he became Grid’s knight. He had been breaking his limits over and over, having fought Maxong and then becoming stronger during the Belial raid. Now, he was in the spotlight for the third time.

Dias tried to fight back and resist. His magic blocked Jude’s greatsword and aimed at Jude’s abdomen a few times. However, Jishuka’s rain of arrows flew over Jude, making his counterattack pointless. As more arrows were shot, Dias’ wounds increased while Jude healed.

Meanwhile, Chris, Pon, and Regas worked with Jude to add more pressure onto Dias. Dias was knocked to his knees and cried out

with pain. He coughed up blood and asked, “The battle gear you use... Were they produced by the Overgeared King? Precious memories—stories that will become history and legends—are contained in these solid objects, right?”

Yes, there was nothing insignificant in the world. Dias wanted to convey it, “We all have our unique circumstances. I have somehow become a villain, but there are many stories where I’m not a monster. I had a special power and had a terrible life because I was born as a hybrid. Then I met my master...”

“...?”

What did Dias want to say? The named NPCs’ long tirade entered the ears of Chris’ group. Thinking it was the precursor of a quest, everyone focused on Dias. This was apart from Jude, who struggled in Regas’ and Pon’s constraints while everyone listened to Dias.

However, Dias didn’t give them a quest. He just asked for a favor, “I hope you don’t hate my master too much. He wasn’t a wicked person in the beginning.”

It was the same for players, NPCs, and monsters. Everyone had a story. As such, the last wish that Dias wanted to convey was for his master’s safety. When Dias finished speaking, he moved his fingers.

“Uh...?”

Some of the surrounding trees turned into elves. No, to be precise, they were changed back into elves. This was the reason why Phou was still hungry despite frequently eating elves.

“That Phou, he is currently on an empty stomach. The satiety he feels is due to my illusions. But this will soon be released, and he won’t be able to fight for long.” Dias looked sympathetically at Phou whom Grid was hitting one-sidedly.

Jishuka asked, “What is your reason for saving the elves?”

“I am also an apostle of justice.”

“...”

“Kukuk, I’m joking. I will say it bluntly. I helped my master, not the elves.”

Yes, he had protected the elves because he hadn’t wanted to see his master’s ‘goods’ damaged. Everything was for the sake of his master. His master had never given all his heart to Dias, but the grace Kir had offered to his knights on the first day had been real.

“I do feel a bit of anger toward my master but...” Dias extended his neck to the struggling Jude, who was still being held back by Regas and Pon. He wanted his end to come from the strongest knight who defeated him.

“W-Wait a minute.” Jishuka tried to stop Jude because she felt reluctant to kill Dias. Chris, Pon, and Regas also looked troubled. However, Jude was adamant. He barely shrugged off Regas and Pon and then swung his greatsword at Dias’ neck without hesitation. “Waste of time. No. His Majesty. Help. I will.”

A gray pillar shot up, then Jude immediately headed to Grid. Once Dias died and his illusions were completely removed, Phou fell into a terrible state of hunger and went berserk. He swung his big hands at Grid continuously.

“Jude! Help!” Only looking at Grid and only thinking about Grid... No, he was a thoughtless knight. Jude broke through his third limit after killing Dias and acted, but it was too late.

“Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle!”

“Kuwaaah!” Phou had become berserk and only focused on attacking. This was a mistake. He wasn’t aware of the damage he received from the shield and the poisonous fog of Valhalla of Infinite Affection, and he didn’t bother to block or avoid Grid’s attack either.

The fight was over. Unable to endure Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle

which had activated twice due to God's Command, Phou turned to gray.

Jude's eyes lit up when he arrived at Grid's side belatedly. "Your Majesty. Cool!"

"..." Kir's stamina was depleted because he hadn't been able to rest for a while after entering the forest.

Pero, the unicorn, licked Kir who looked haggard and drained. The unicorn's clear eyes contained feelings of deep affection and anxiety, but these emotions weren't delivered to Kir. From Kir's point of view, pets were just chunks of graphics and artificial intelligence.

"Tch." Kir wiped away the saliva on his cheek like it was dirt and shifted his gaze to see Faker standing silently nearby. This made Kir sincerely curious.

"Why are you so relentless? Is there any meaning in killing me? What does the Overgeared Kingdom gain if I lose items and experience?" Kir grumbled despite already knowing the reason why. Satisfy was a competitive society like in reality. It was natural for players to keep other players in check. Let's suppose that they let Kir go. One day, he might have an impact comparable to Grid, and when that happened, he was likely to threaten Grid.

"Shit... Dammit." Kir understood why Grid was obsessed with killing him. Now that he was a target, Kir's fate was inevitable. He would suffer enormous damages from the moment he started dancing on Grid's palm. However, even so...

"It will be a mistake if you think this will end so easily."

His stamina was slowly recovering thanks to the unicorn's blessing. Kir overcame his exhaustion and held a glass bottle to Beniyaru's mouth, who was still trapped in his arms. The bottle was filled with a black liquid.

“The Yatan Essence. If she swallows this much, even a named NPC will die instantly. Understand? I absolutely won’t die alone.” Beniyaru was the one Grid had called out to, and she had asked Grid for help. As such, Kir speculated that there was a special link between Grid and Beniyaru and that Beniyaru’s death would be a significant blow to Grid. “I won’t lose everything alone. Isn’t that right?”

“It isn’t right.”

While he was chuckling wickedly, Kir stopped with surprise. “...!”

He got goosebumps as a God Hand flew toward him and swung a hammer.

“Urgh!” Kir became stiff due to the hammer! Grid used that moment to take Beniyaru away. Kir gritted his teeth. Feeling that he was obviously the victim, the hatred and anger in his voice were genuine as he said, “You! How much do you want to take from me?”

Grid asked in return, “How much do you have to take away from the elves?”

“What?” Kir was speechless. He was taken aback by the question since he now completely understood the feelings of a victim. Grid ignored the silent Kir and looked at Beniyaru. Did she want to get away from reality? Having blocked off her emotions and thoughts, Beniyaru looked like an empty doll.

“She... What have the elves done that they have to suffer like this?”

“...” The present Kir couldn’t answer that. Grid aimed at Kir and was about to hit his neck. However, at this moment, Huroi ran over urgently and whispered in Grid’s ears, “Master, the horse he is riding is a unicorn.”

“Unicorn? Really?”

“Take it.”

“What?”

Take away a pet? What was this? Pets were different from items. Players didn't have to worry about losing pets when dying because the ownership of a pet was fully guaranteed.

“There is a way. Ownership can be transferred over.”

“No, what are you saying?” Grid frowned. He couldn't understand Huroi at all. “Why would that bastard transfer his pet to me?”

“In exchange for sparing him...”

Everyone's eyes were focused on the scene of Huroi whispering in Grid's ears. The people didn't know what they were talking about, so they soon got a shock.

“Kir, do you want to live?” It was due to Grid's sudden offer.

“What? You will spare me?” Kir was also confused.

Grid nodded at the suspicious Kir. “Yes. I'll spare you. Didn't you spend a lot of money on the elves this time? If you die here, won't you lose your ranking and have trouble with future transactions?”

It made a lot of sense, so Kir didn't deny it. He thought about it and immediately noticed the catch because he was a merchant. “What do you want in return for sparing me?”

Grid pointed to the unicorn in response. “That.”

“Crazy jerk!” Kir's angry reaction was natural. The value of a unicorn was so great that it couldn't be converted into money! Kir calculated that no one had a unicorn as a pet. He would rather die than give up something so precious. Just when Kir was about to refuse the proposal without hesitation, Grid said, “Think carefully before answering. If you make a mistake, I will be an enemy you can never get rid of.”

Gulp! Chills went down Kir's spine. He was well aware of what

Immortal had suffered recently. Could one merchant cope with the Overgeared Kingdom that not even Immortal could handle? Realistically, it was hard. The protection of the empire might've prevented Immortal from being raided by those who are tempted by the items, but it was impossible for other ordinary players to deal with. He could become the target of two billion people! Kir imagined something terrible and shook his head.

Grid didn't give Kir a chance to think too deeply. "Give me the unicorn. Then I will spare your life without giving you a death bounty."

"You will really spare me? You won't set a kill order on me?"

"Yes. Instead, I will kill you the next time we meet. I really dislike you. Be careful not to encounter me again for the rest of your life."

"Ugh..!"

Grid had the trinity of money, strength, and authority. The force he could gather using his items as raw material was infinite. All these made Kir afraid of Grid, and he was convinced that it was best to accept Grid's offer. In the end...

[Ownership of the unicorn 'Pero' has been transferred to 'Grid.']

Kir agreed to Grid's request. This was a decision for his future.

"...Can I go now?" Kir asked in a powerless voice.

Grid nodded. "Yes. Go."

Kir had lost time, money, pride, and his unicorn. However, his eyes were overflowing with motivation.

'Definitely... I will someday repay today's disgrace.'

It might not be possible in one or two years. However, the story would change in four or five years. Kir would successfully recover under the aegis of the empire as planned. He would build up an alliance around the Gauss Kingdom and get revenge on Grid one

thousand—no, tens of thousands of times. Kir believed that if he had more strength and authority, he would be able to do something about Grid.

However, this faith was soon broken.

“Did you forget my warning? Didn’t I tell you not to meet me?”

“What?” Kir had walked for around 20 minutes and was shocked when he suddenly heard a voice. He raised his head to see Grid blocking the way on a white unicorn.

“W-What is this? It can’t be!”

Was the top-ranked player such a gangster? No, it was impossible. Grid pointed a knife at Kir who was denying his imagination.

“I told you I would kill you again. Didn’t I tell you to be careful?”

“Y-You son of a bitch!”

Grid was a villain—no, a scoundrel... No, a gangster. Kir paled as he belatedly realized Grid’s essence and shouted, “Knights Summoning!”

It wasn’t the time to cling to the elves. He had to take down Grid today! Kir summoned his three knights...

“What?” Kir lost his soul.

It was due to an unexpected notification window.

[No knights are available to be summoned.]

“D-Don’t tell me...?”

“The unicorn is good.”

Kir, who had transformed the forest of the world tree into hell, turned to gray. This was the precursor to the fall of the Merchant King. That’s right. Kir thought he had lost everything to Grid today, but it was only an illusion. He still had things left to lose—the trading connections he had all over the continent.

[The unicorn is sad.]

[Affinity with the unicorn is very low.]

[It is recommended to give the unicorn a new name.]

[Affinity with the elves has increased by 50.]

[The world tree is interested in you.]

[The world tree has sent you an invitation.]

Chapter 836

“I won’t forget...! Never! Never!!” Anger and hatred filled Kir’s eyes as he screamed and turned to gray, showing his willingness to get revenge no matter what.

However, Grid’s expression was calm. Naturally, Grid knew that being the subject of a deep grudge could be deadly. A disaster might end up returning to him. After all, Grid had many grudges in the past and had experienced returning anger and hatred to his opponent. Therefore, he couldn’t be unaware of this fact.

‘...Now, I have become the target of revenge.’

The more power he gained, the more he had at stake.

“Is it okay to push him this far?”

“Why wouldn’t it be okay?” Grid didn’t regret his choice. His eyes weren’t shaken as he stared at Jishuka, who looked extremely worried. “Was there something wrong with my actions today?”

Merchant King Kir was a potential competitor, but Grid had fought for a just reason. Since it had already happened, it was better to crush Kir thoroughly. Showing mercy was just likely to lead to deadlier disaster being returned to Grid. At this moment, weren’t there countless players forming alliances and then betraying and going to war against each other?

“It is a matter of survival. I don’t want to give leeway to the other person.”

Yes, Grid couldn’t show any weaknesses. A second or third Immortal would be born to threaten Grid’s precious people.

‘I will trample them so thoroughly that they can’t even try getting revenge.’ Grid pledged with cold eyes.

Gulps could be heard from the Overgeared members watching Grid. However, Chris had a bright expression on his face. Chris

had once been head of the Seven Guilds and knew the virtues of a leader.

‘A leader needs to be ruthless towards the enemies.’

Satisfy was a world where survival of the fittest ruled. A person who was gentle to everyone would just be eaten. Therefore, Chris judged that Grid’s qualities were ideal. Meanwhile, Grid checked the information of the unicorn.

[Unicorn]

[-A legendary divine creature on the East Continent. It is very aggressive and not easily tamed. They have a temperament that loves women and hates men.

Name: Not Set

Level: 189

Affinity: -110/100

Health: 40,000/40,000

Mana: 80,000/80,000

Defense: 1,980

-Barding can be equipped (Barding= body armor for war horses)

Status: Sad and petulant.

(Master, who gave me many girlfriends, has abandoned me. If he was going to abandon me, then abandon me. Why did he give me away? To add to my grief, my pride is hurt. It is more annoying because my new master is a man.)

-Skills Possessed-

[Unicorn’s Blessing (Passive)]

Increases the resource recovery of all riders by 20%. If the rider is a woman, there will be a further 30% increase.

[Sprint]

Moves a distance of 60 meters per second for up to 3 seconds. At this time, the unicorn and riders will enter a super armored state and will resist all conditions. However, physical status conditions can't be resisted. If the rider is a woman, the unicorn can move for up to 5 seconds.

Skill Cooldown Time: 2 minutes.

Mana Consumption: 4,900

[Jump]

The unicorn can jump up to 10 meters. Avoid all types of attacks and obstacles at the moment of the jump.

Cooldown Time: 5 minutes.

Mana Consumption: 7,800

[Repel]

The unicorn will attack a target with its large and beautiful horn. Knocks back the target and deals 10,000 fixed damage.

Skill Cooldown Time: 30 seconds.

Mana Consumption: 1,500

[Male Hatred]

The unicorn will hate all males, regardless of the species. Humans are no exception. If the owner of the unicorn is a male, affinity will reduce by one point per day. In order to raise affinity, the owner must keep the unicorn in constant touch with women.]

“ ... ”

Gender discrimination? The confused Grid stared at the unicorn.

The combination of the unicorn's elegant and smooth white fur, long neck, and beautiful horn looked good. Moreover, the unicorn's big black eyes were completely pure. The unicorn's appearance didn't match the description in the status window at all.

‘A bug?’

Were the details of the status window wrong? Grid reached out to stroke the unicorn’s face. Suddenly, the unicorn huffed and struck Grid’s chest with the horn.

[You have suffered 10,000 damage!]

“Ugh...!” This damage was unfamiliar for Grid who had an extremely high defense. He frowned at the pain, taking a few steps back as he stared at the unicorn. The unicorn’s eyes suddenly curved into the shape of crescent moons as he approached Jishuka. He licked Jishuka’s big chest and pretty face with his tongue.

Jishuka didn’t know the reality of this unicorn and smiled brightly. “He is a child who follows people well. It is fortunate. You got a good pet.”

“...Didn’t you see that he just hit me?”

“It is probably an expression of affection. What pet would attack their master?”

The unicorn’s status changed as he buried his face in Jishuka’s chest and listened to their conversation.

[Status: Joyful

(I didn’t think my ugly new master would have such a pretty girlfriend. This is a complete gain.)]

[Affinity with the unicorn has risen by 10.]

“...”

It was disgusting. No, seriously, what was with this different tone when it came to women?

‘Was the developer sick when they made the unicorns?’

Grid frowned and gave a name to the unicorn. He didn’t intend to give the unicorn a rough name just because he didn’t like his personality.

“Overgeared Corn.”

[A name has been given to the unicorn.]

[A bond has formed with the unicorn.]

[Affinity with the unicorn is restored to a normal value.]

[Affinity: 0/100]

Was he that glad about receiving a name? Grid watched the unicorn and thought he was a surprisingly pure creature. However, in the eyes of the Overgeared members, the unicorn seemed sadder than when he lost his master.

“Thank you for saving us.”

The 12 Te, elves from the 12 clans, bowed toward Grid. This was the first time that the highly prideful elves had bowed to a human. Grid felt more embarrassed than proud. “This isn’t something to thank me for. Didn’t I tell you? I just wanted to repay the favor I received from Sticks.”

“That...” Deruyaru, who had an exceptionally young appearance among the elves, grabbed Grid’s hands and raised herself up. Then she asked carefully, “What exactly is your relationship with Sage Sticks? Do you know Sticks’ current status?”

100 years ago, the honorable high elf Sticks left the forest before the tragedy that split the World Tree’s Forest in half. Male elves and female elves had separate villages around the world tree for several decades now. They pretended not to know each other even when they passed each other in the forest.

The 12 Te took this situation seriously. The birth rate of the elves had fallen even further, and they worried about the survival of the species. However, the king who had left to be with the male elves ignored the worries of the 12 Te. He was firm about not reconciling with the female elves, who also loathed the male elves.

If only Sage Sticks appeared at this time... He could awaken the king's spirit and lay the foundations for uniting the species again...

The 12 Te missed Sticks. In particular, they felt a greater need for Sticks after this incident. If Sticks had been here, they wouldn't have fallen for the human's lowly trap. The problem was that they didn't know where Sticks' location was.

Grid explained, "Sticks is my special friend. Right now, he is staying in the Overgeared Kingdom to help me."

"Sticks is in a human kingdom..." The 12 Te twitched.

This reaction puzzled Grid. "By the way, why don't you know Sticks' status? Didn't he recently come here?"

Sticks had gone to the World Tree's Forest to make an antidote for Khan. However, the elves didn't know this fact and were confused along with Grid. The 12 Te were perplexed. "Sticks recently visited the forest?"

"Yes."

"This..." The 12 Te whispered among themselves after hearing Grid's answer.

"Did Sticks appear in the king's village?"

"That's right. It seems to be the case."

"I'm sure the terrible king told him all sorts of lies. Sticks won't know about the situation in the forest."

There was only one conclusion. The 12 Te turned to Grid with serious expressions.

"Could you please ask Sticks to visit the forest? Tell him not to see the king but to meet the 12 Te."

"Eh? Y-Yes. Okay."

What other episodes were hidden among the elves? There must be a serious situation for them to call their king 'terrible.' Grid

didn't want to know because it seemed to be an annoying situation. However, it wasn't possible for him to leave the forest immediately. He couldn't ignore the call of the world tree!

‘Is it going to thank me for saving the elves?’

Wouldn't he receive a great gift then? Grid was filled with high expectations as he moved to the village under the elves' guidance. Along the way, he didn't notice that there were feelings of emptiness and anger in the silent Beniyaru's eyes, which were different from the other 12 Te.

However, Grid did see the notification window that appeared in front of him.

[The one who leads the dead has been born again as a legend!]

[The world will fall into a panic!]

It was a world message announcing the birth of a new legend. The style of the message was somewhat different from normal. With the mention of 'reborn' and 'one who leads the dead', only one person came to mind. The aghast Grid and Overgeared members stopped in their tracks.

“Agnus...”

『 The sculptor Polish, who became famous at the time of his debut, has found out that he learned sculpting through Satisfy. Experts in each field claim that it is possible to learn skills in Satisfy. In fact, many organizations and countries are trying to nurture talent through Satisfy. The S.A Group... 』

The huge castle was locked in silence. Only the voices from the TV echoed meaninglessly in the darkness. Then the capsule opened. A thin and pale man rose from it and wore a robe over his naked body. He was Agnus. His tired eyes looked at a large portrait in the middle of the room. The woman in the portrait was smiling happily. There were no traces of the unhappiness and unfortunate

things that had happened before she took her own life.

“It won’t be long until we meet again.”

He had finally upgraded the growth type hidden class Baal’s Contractor to the legendary rating. This was the result of repeated efforts over three years. Agnus had gotten the ‘creation’ skill he had been hoping for.

“Caroline, I will make you.”

It didn’t matter what sacrifices he had to make, or if it was a lie and not reality. He wanted to recreate his lover who had been driven to death because of him. Then this impoverished reality would become the lie. Agnus leaned his cheek on the portrait and fell asleep.

Chapter 837

It was like watching wild dogs with rabies. The terrible kapen skunks that foamed at the mouth were threatening monsters which stimulated a human's primordial fear.

As she faced the skunks rushing through the foothills, Royman, an Overgeared knight, yelled, "Archers! Run and seize the highlands! The spearmen and shield soldiers will buy time here with me!"

"Waaaaahhhhh!"

The kapen skunks appeared at the outskirts of Reinhardt every spring and were level 277. Their strength and awful stench gave hell to the knights and soldiers of the Eternal Kingdom. Due to the large casualties that occurred without exception, many tombstones were erected every spring, which produced the saying 'there is no stone in the spring of Eternal.'

However, Reinhardt was now part of the Overgeared Kingdom. The knights and soldiers of Overgeared confronted the kapen skunks boldly. Their flesh had been trained while farming with Piaro!

"Haaap!" Royman moved faster than the skunks jumping on rocks, trees, and other objects as she placed her shield on the ground, embedding the sharp end of the triangular shield in it.

As soon as the skunks approached, the ground collapsed like it had been dug with hoes.

"...!"

Beasts were said to be sensitive to impending disasters. In line with this, the skunks that were flying through the steep foothills suddenly stopped with surprise. Then while they were startled by the sudden landslide, arrows rained down on them. Royman and the soldiers bought time while the archers occupied the highlands.

“Good!”

The jaffa arrows pierced the skunks and turned them to gray one by one. Pillars of light fell onto Royman and her people several times. It was the symbol of a level up.

“There is a signal from Sua’s group! The skunks in the Buren Valley have been completely eradicated!”

“There is a signal from Bland’s group! The skunks in the Fortina Field have been completely eradicated!”

“Royman’s group has sent a signal!”

“Okay. Then the southern section has also been cleaned.”

In the outer barracks, Lael couldn’t hide his satisfied smile as he conducted the army with a map in front of him. He remembered the painful first spring they experienced after establishing the Overgeared Kingdom.

Many villages on the outskirts of Reinhardt had been destroyed by the group of skunks, and countless people had lost their lives or become refugees. It had been almost impossible to eradicate the skunks, considering their high breeding rate and the lacking power of the Overgeared members at the time. There would’ve been irreversible damage without Overgeared members like Pon and Regas.

However, as the years passed, the Overgeared Kingdom became stronger. The talent Grid brought over from the East Continent, the people Piaro trained, and the army Asmophel raised meant that this year’s military power was the strongest ever. After they repelled the scary skunks in just two days, Lael felt that their military power was hundreds of times stronger than before.

‘It is a reward that burns the soul.’

Lael thought that the efforts and hardships of the past were

worth it. He felt proud of his contribution to the development of the kingdom, despite suffering from hair loss.

‘But...’

He couldn’t be satisfied with just this. The Overgeared Kingdom wasn’t the best yet. The Saharan Empire wasn’t the only threat to the kingdom. There was also the relatively recent threat of the Valhalla Kingdom. Furthermore, there was one more person.

‘Agnus...’

A few minutes ago, there was a world message about the birth of a new legend. One of the strongest enemies had been reborn as a legend, and this made Lauel nervous. The responsibility of raising the Overgeared Kingdom’s strength even further weighed down on his shoulders.

‘Things have become twisted in many ways.’

It wasn’t hard to speculate that Agnus’ class, Baal’s Contractor, had grown to the legendary level. Additionally, a growth type class probably didn’t have the level reset when it reached legend.

Lauel hadn’t expected Agnus to become a legend so fast. This had been due to Agnus’ method of gameplay. Someone had said, ‘There is no one who dies as often as Agnus among the high rankers.’ Agnus was a rare type of ranker who wasn’t afraid of death. Death in Satisfy meant a decline in growth, which had made Lauel predict that the timing of Agnus’ upgrade wouldn’t take place for a long time.

‘But it was the opposite...’ Lauel felt a chill as he thought about Agnus and realized what Agnus’ frequent deaths meant. ‘It means he has been continuously challenging content with little or no information.’

Agnus pursued a high risk, high-return gameplay method that was more like thorough calculations than madness. It was the reason why Agnus had stayed at 7th in the rankings for so many

years despite dying so often.

‘He has his own standards. He can bear this level of damage until he reaches a shortcut... He has his own criteria...’

There was only one conclusion that could be made. Unlike what was known, Agnus wasn’t as mad as he seemed on the surface. Was Agnus a much stronger enemy than Lael assumed? Lael shivered and gulped as he realized this.

-Grid: Lael. Send people to become a bus for Ruby and Sexy Schoolgirl.

A whisper came to Lael from Grid.

-Grid: We have to raise them in order to be able to fight against Agnus. Additionally, raise the offerings to the Rebecca Church by three times. It doesn’t matter if there is a deficit. I will fill up the lacking money with my own money. We need more priests in order to fight an undead army. And in my personal opinion, there are NPCs who have completed training in the academy. Can’t we use them now?

-Lael: Yes. I understand.

Lael’s anxiety disappeared as he responded to Grid’s orders and opinions. So what if Agnus was stronger than he expected? It didn’t matter. After all, his master was also growing more than expected!

A towering tree soared into the sky. A few hundred meters away from the gigantic world tree, there was an elf village with houses made of dense branches.

“What?”

“Is this okay?”

Jishuka, Faker, Huroi, Pon, Regas, and Chris. The elite members of Overgeared were surprised and confused as they visited the elf

village with Grid. It was due to Grid's order to move away from national affairs and concentrate on their personal growth.

“Realistically, it is impossible. Look at Jishuka and Chris. Since the founding of the kingdom, they have been in charge of Bairan and Reidan. The two cities will become inoperable if they don't do their jobs.”

“That's right. The kingdom will fall into confusion.”

Becoming a lord was a dream for all players. They could build up their own territory, accumulating great wealth and power based on the taxes that came from there. However, a high status meant great responsibility.

Jishuka's and Chris' workloads were considerable. Assuming that they played Satisfy for 14 hours a day, at least a quarter of that time was spent on territory management. It was the same for the other lords. The lords of the country had their respective roles and were obliged to carry out these duties. The entire Overgeared Kingdom would become a mess if key members like Jishuka, Chris, and Pon didn't do their jobs.

However, Grid didn't withdraw his command.

“It's okay. In the past few years, the Overgeared Kingdom has been able to develop thanks to you sacrificing your personal time. Now it is time to prove this development.”

“What?”

“I have secured NPCs to do your jobs.”

“What?”

Lauel had been struggling since the founding of the Overgeared Kingdom. Administrator Rabbit was the only NPC who could help Lauel with his work. Finding an NPC with administrative talent was like picking a star from the sky.

“Rabbit has selected talents and Sticks trained them at the

academy.”

They trained people in administrative work, just like Piaro and Asmophel trained people in military work.

“Now, we aren’t lacking talents. Most of the work you are doing right now will be replaced by the new talents in the future. You have suffered a lot in the meantime. I am grateful for the work and congratulate you for being able to escape it.”

Agnus was a very aggressive person. He had dealt with both the Overgeared members and Valhalla before becoming a legend, and it was unknown how strong that monster would be now. It was likely that he would continue jumping without limit. Grid needed to be prepared for this.

“Go with the flow. As I said earlier, all of you should focus on your personal growth. Shouldn’t you change to your fourth advancement class?”

Lim Cheolho had stated it clearly a few years ago at a press conference. A normal class would eventually become as powerful as a hidden class due to the class advancements. Grid had felt somewhat deprived as a legendary class, but now he realized he had been wrong.

‘It doesn’t mean I will have a disadvantage if everyone is strong.’

Why?

‘Now I have the best colleagues by my side.’

No matter how strong he was, there were many talented people in the Overgeared Guild who excelled at certain areas more than others. Grid believed in them and wanted to rely on their strength.

‘I also have to become stronger.’

By the time the normal classes became as strong as legendary classes...

‘I will be a myth-rated class.’

It wasn't a joke or arrogance. Grid had absorbed the power of great demons and produced several myth-rated items. So, he was sincerely looking at all the possibilities. Grid asked the cute elf called Deruyaru, "Speaking of my colleagues, can they hunt the ancient species while staying in the forest for a while?"

Aside from Deruyaru, the eyes of the 12 Te widened.

"Do you know how strong the ancient species are?"

"It is too dangerous if your colleagues aren't as strong as you. They will lose their limbs."

"That's right. It is good for us if you hunt the ancient species, but... you are placing too big a burden on your colleagues. Please forget it." The 12 Te refused Grid's request due to how much they liked him.

However, in the midst of this turmoil, Deruyaru opened her mouth, "We don't need to worry about Grid's colleagues. They are all strong. I saw it myself."

"..."

Weren't humans originally weak creatures? Were they mistaken? Grid shrugged at the confused 12 Te. "There are dozens of kids who are as strong as they are. I will call them all to the forest in order to hunt. We will get rid of the ancient species."

"Y-Yes..." It was too absurd to be a bluff. The 12 Te shook before nodding. Then a warm voice rang out in the air, -Children of the forest. The human loved by the goddess of light. Give him and his colleagues the blessing of the elementals.

It was the world tree. Grid and the Overgeared members were now experiencing a fraudulent event.

[The world tree has given you a huge blessing!]

[Player Grid and all the players in the Grid-led forces will be able to contract with elementals. However, it is limited to lower

elementals. The attribute can't be selected. The attribute will be given at random.]

[The benefit will only apply to existing members. Any new members won't receive this benefit.]

Grid's soul was leaving him when he heard the trembling voices of Jishuka and the Overgeared members.

“...I love Grid.”

“Me too...”

“Me too.”

“ ... ”

Chapter 838

[Thanks to the player ‘Grid’, you have received the blessing of the world tree. You can now make contracts with lower elementals.]

[You must meet the world tree in order to make a contract with the elementals.]

It felt like they had just received a bunch of money while sitting down doing nothing. The Overgeared members cheered at the notification window that suddenly popped up.

“God Grid, what did he do again?”

“It is great! He hits a jackpot every time he goes somewhere!”

“Grid is the best!”

Making a contract with elementals...! This was uncharted territory for most players, which gave them even greater expectations. The excited Overgeared members started preparing to travel in the order that Lael decided. The destination was naturally the World Tree’s Forest.

-Lael: Yes. Only the players belonging to the Overgeared Guild, not the Overgeared Kingdom, are eligible to contract with the elementals.

-Grid: I’m glad.

-Lael: Yes. Unconditional rewards shouldn’t be given to people who can move to other kingdoms at any time. By the way, have you signed with an elemental?

-Grid: I’m going to try it now.

Grid stood in front of the world tree as he grasped the situation through Lael’s whisper. It was a huge tree that he couldn’t see the end of. His neck hurt as he turned his head to measure the tree’s size. The Overgeared members, Mercedes, and even the

unthinking Jude gulped. The humans, who were proud about dominating the world, became infinitely smaller in front of the infinite mysteries of nature.

“I greet the mother of the forest,” Grid respectfully greeted the world tree. It wasn’t an attitude based on any calculations, he truly was honored. Just like the others, Grid was overwhelmed by the world tree.

The voice of the world tree was warm and sweet. [You who have received the love of the goddess of light after exercising a strong will... I am grateful to you for helping my children. The protection of the elementals will forever be with you...]

‘Elementals!’ Grid’s heart thumped.

Beniyaru’s elementals had neutralized Mercedes’ and Grid’s attacks. The mighty image of a burning giant and a beautiful woman came to mind, amplifying his expectations.

‘It doesn’t matter if they are lower elementals.’

It would be great!

Duguen duguen! Grid was unable to calm his beating heart and knelt before the world tree. This was according to the procedure that the elves described. There was a flash of light that was brighter than the sun, but it didn’t blind him. Additionally, it was warm. The green light wrapped around Grid’s body gently.

“Ah...” Grid couldn’t help letting out a groan. His mind and body relaxed the moment he was wrapped in the light, and a feeling of infinite happiness rose within him. It was like laying in a futon on the night before a holiday. He wanted time to stop right here. However, he couldn’t relax. The brightly lit up Grid opened his eyes.

“I, Grid, want to contract with an elemental!”

The light surrounding Grid grew stronger as if responding to his call. Simultaneously...

[The lower elementals are looking at you.]

[The lower fire elementals are scared after feeling a fire hotter than them and have run away!]

[The lower water elementals trying to reach you have evaporated and disappeared!]

[The lower earth elementals smelled the metals on you and have hidden in the ground!]

[The lower wind elementals realize they can't wrap around you and have passed by!]

“...??” Grid panicked when notification windows which were completely different to his expectations popped up. In particular, he was greatly disappointed that the fire elementals had escaped.

‘I thought the fire elementals would be a hint to achieve the Duke of Fire.’

The great magician Braham had said that it had been due to the Duke of Fire that Pagma had been surrounded by flames while hammering. It had been from this point that Pagma's status went up. This supported the fact that blacksmiths and fire were highly compatible with each other. So, Grid naturally wanted the fire elemental. Yet they had run away! Additionally, all the other elementals didn't want him!

“What is this?”

The tranquility that came from the light around him was lost. Just when Grid was nervous that a contract with an elemental might not be possible, another notification window appeared.

[The world tree admires your big vessel that can't be filled with lower elementals. The world tree has called for the hidden elementals!]

[The lower elementals of light and darkness have appeared!]

“Ah...!”

Round masses of darkness and light descended from the sun and the covered moon, surprising the many elves watching the ceremony. It was because the light and dark elementals were the symbol of the 'royal family' that not even the 12 Te could have.

He might be their savior but he was still a human. Yet Grid was going to be chosen by a light or dark elemental? It was something that the elves couldn't understand. On the other hand, the Overgeared members, Mercedes, and Jude were calm because they had no information about elementals. They didn't know anything and kept watching the elemental contract ceremony silently.

Meanwhile, Grid was suffering once again.

[The lower light elemental is consumed by the darkness hidden inside you!]

[The lower dark elemental is lost in the light of Goddess Rebecca, who has blessed you!]

[The world tree is embarrassed!]

"What?"

Wasn't this too much? Grid's anxiety was amplified as the elementals of light and darkness disappeared. He was forced to feel like this since he had been rejected by all the elementals. The voice of the world tree entered the ears of the trembling Grid, [The goddess of light's love toward you is greater than you thought. Yet you also have a great darkness in your heart.]

"Is this the end?" Grid asked bluntly.

The world tree took special measures. [I watched from beginning to end as you struggled to protect my children in the forest. I can't ignore your grace, so I will give you a greater blessing.]

[The intermediate elementals are looking at you.]

[The intermediate fire elementals are scared after feeling a fire hotter than them and have run away!]

[The intermediate water elementals trying to reach you have evaporated and disappeared!]

[The intermediate earth elementals smelled the metals on you and have hidden in the ground!]

[The intermediate wind elementals realize they can't wrap around you and have passed by!]

[The intermediate light elemental...]

[The intermediate dark elemental...]

....

...

“...”

The same thing happened again. Like the lower elementals, the intermediate elementals couldn't endure Grid's presence.

‘Isn't this too much?’

Was he not going to get a reward? Then it happened when Grid was cursing in his mind...

[The advanced elementals are looking at you.]

The world tree called for the advanced elementals. Elementals resembling Beniyaru's elementals appeared around Grid.

“Wow.”

The world tree hadn't given up? Grid was stunned. However, the 12 Te protested violently.

“Mother! I understand Mother's heart but you have to be careful!”

“We don't doubt Grid but we are concerned about the weakness of the human mind. Humans can become corrupted by excessive power. Mother, think about the seven malignant people who gained the power of a god and became corrupted. Grid might become a new malignant person.”

“That’s right! The emergence of a malignant evil in this era with no Hero King will signal the destruction of this world! Calm down, Mother!”

The seven malignant people—Grid’s strongest passive skill, God's Command had originated from them. Who would’ve expected the name to pop out of the elves’ mouths? Grid’s eyes widened with surprise as he muttered, “I am the Hero King...”

“What?”

“What?!!”

The 12 Te were astonished.

[That’s right. You are a human beloved by the goddess of light and the Hero King. I can trust you.]

The world tree was determined. The advanced elementals tried to reach Grid only to stop repeatedly. Unlike the lower and intermediate elementals, the advanced elementals spoke in the human language.

“This is a human already good at dealing with fire. My flames won’t be a great help to this human.”

“It is too hot and bad for me. My water disappears whenever I near him.”

“Um... Ummm... The power of the earth... Not required... Umm... I don’t think... Um..”

“He is called Grid? He already has the power of a storm. My wind won’t help. Hmm, the elemental kings might be needed.”

The advanced elementals also rejected Grid. Then the advanced light and dark elementals appeared belatedly. There was a white sphere with the size of a soccer ball. The cute ball of light with yellow half-moon eyes spoke first, “I like it. This person’s light is like Mother’s light. The hidden darkness is scary but I can overcome it. I like it.”

There was a black sphere that resembled the light elemental. The red-eyed black sphere adamantly rejected Grid, “I don’t like it. This child has more light than darkness. I don’t like it.”

So, it was decided. The important thing in contracting with an elemental was the will of the elemental. Grid didn’t worry about this part.

[Light elemental, be with him forever.]

“Okay!” The light elemental consented to the world tree’s request.

[You have succeeded in contracting with the light elemental!]

[The title ‘Light Elemental (Advanced) Contractor’ has been acquired.]

[Light Elemental (Advanced) Contractor]

[You can use the advanced light elemental.

Current level of the light elemental: 1

-Available Elemental Techniques-

* The energy of the advanced elemental is infinite. An advanced elemental doesn’t consume the resources of the contractor.

[Sword of Light]

Makes the elemental into a sword of light.

It will follow the contract and help the contractor secure visibility in the dark. When an enemy with the attribute of darkness is found, it will move by itself and attack the enemy.

The attack power of the Sword of Light is affected by the contractor’s physical attack power and magic attack power.

* This skill can be maintained at all times. However, separate techniques can’t be used in the Sword of Light state.

[Flash]

The light elemental will ‘instantaneously’ move to the target pointed out by the contractor.

If the target is an enemy, it will shine intensely and blind the target for 0.3 seconds. The target can’t resist the blindness effect.

If the target is the contractor’s ally, it will shine brightly and give the target a one-time ‘dark attack resistance’ effect.

Cooldown Time: 5 minutes.]

“...Amazing.”

There was a CC that couldn’t be resisted as well as an autonomous attack power. Although it was limited to a dark target, it could surpass a Sword Saint’s cognition. This was just the performance of a level 1 elemental. Grid didn’t know how great the elemental would be when the level rose.

The 12 Te weren’t exaggerating when they were worried about the seven malignant people. Jishuka’s eyes turned to heart shapes as the Sword of Light started to hover beside Grid. “A visual explosion...”

It was like the lights that were set up for shooting commercials with celebrities. The power of the light was almost fraudulent. Grid was becoming equipped with more systems.

Chapter 839

[The lower wind elemental whispers that it will make your arrows faster.]

[The lower wind elemental whispers that it will make your spear lighter.]

[The lower wind elemental whispers that it will make your mouth lighter.]

“Why is it my mouth?”

“...??”

Jishuka, Pon, and Huroi contracted with wind elementals.

[The lower earth elemental promises to make your body more solid.]

Regas succeeded in contracting with an earth elemental.

It was a bit disappointing after seeing Grid contract with an advanced spirit, but they didn't express it. After all, if it wasn't for Grid, they wouldn't even have the opportunity to contract with an elemental. It was an undeserved honor for them to even contract with a lower elemental.

‘Good.’

Jishuka and Pon had their attack speed and attack accuracy increased slightly due to the lower wind elemental, while Huroi had his talking speed increased thanks to the wind elemental. Regas gained more resistance and defense due to the earth elemental, making him fully satisfied. He was particularly joyful because his low defense had grabbed his ankle several times.

Meanwhile, Faker and Chris received great fortune.

[The lower wind elemental notices that you are faster than it and has retreated with frustration.]

[The intermediate wind elemental whispers that it is going to have fun with you.]

[All lower elementals have felt the qualities of a tyrant and have run away.]

[The intermediate earth elemental promises to govern your rough nature.]

After seeing the people who successfully contracted with the intermediate elementals, Chris established a hypothesis that the most important factor when contracting with a higher elemental was a 'higher rated class'. The basis for this hypothesis was the two men who managed to make contracts with intermediate elementals. Faker had received the second class 'Shadow Master's Student' after Khan's death while Chris had the second class 'Tyrant.'

"It is highly likely. Isn't this why Grid contracted with an advanced spirit?"

"Hrmm... We will know for sure when we see the result of Yura's contract."

Would Demon Slayer Yura succeed in contracting with an advanced elemental like Grid? Grid and all the members of Overgeared were filled with expectations.

There was a thick fog around the poisonous river. It was a terrible fog that caused the 'poisoned' state when it was breathed in. The volcanoes in the area were active and the earth was shaking with agitation. The sense of balance was lost. The boiling lava melted skin with heat alone and didn't allow any living thing to enter.

This was the 32nd Hell. It was full of chaos after losing its ruler, Belial. Creatures were no longer controlled, and its residents had long since left their homes. Only hungry demonic creatures were

left wandering aimlessly. In this place, gunshots rang out, announcing the deaths of the demonic beasts.

Tatang! Tang tang!

A demonic beast turned to gray whenever the gun fired. Dozens of pillars of gray ash kept rising through the fog. The demonic beasts witnessed their kin being killed and lost momentum. Their tails dropped, making them seem like puppies as they ran away.

However, the beauty didn't miss any of them. She jumped through the space between them and shoved her sword into the mouths of the retreating demonic beasts. The Demon Slayer's beautiful white skin looked red as blood splashed on her.

“Sigh... Sigh...”

Any communication with the human world was blocked in hell. It was impossible to live alone in this barren landscape with a normal mentality.

Yura had never lost her composure apart from when she dealt with Grid. However, life in hell was hard. Her body and mind had long been exhausted. Now, she couldn't tell if the screams that constantly rang in her ears were real or false, and her thoughts were a mess.

Nonetheless, Yura kept moving forward. She walked without resting in the unchanging scenery that she had seen for several months already and pointed her gun at a demonic beast.

Tatang!

She longed to be qualified to stand at the same level as Grid, who had collapsed the sky to become the new sky. Yura wanted to feel proud again. Desperately wanting to be the best again, she wanted to prove that the Demon Slayer class she had selected wasn't lacking compared to Sword Saint and Pagma's Descendant. She didn't want to feel ashamed when she faced Grid. Furthermore, she didn't want to be a burden to Grid after abandoning the Yatan

Church for the Overgeared Kingdom.

“...?” Yura stopped in place as she was moving forward. Then her eyes shook. It was because she felt a change in the landscape of hell that had been the same for two months. In the distance, she saw a black castle covered in fog.

‘Belial’s Castle?’ Yura gulped as the light of the castle reflected in her eyes.

She was filled with hope that perhaps something left in the ownerless castle would help her. There might be a fierce monster, but she was convinced there would be a treasure to help her grow further. This wasn’t without basis. Considering the symbolism of a great demon’s castle, Yura’s expectations were reasonable.

A huge dusty gate opened instantly under Yura’s hands.

“...” Yura’s eyes narrowed as she observed the scenery outside the castle. Had the demonic beasts eaten themselves after becoming hungry? The outside of the castle was filled with the stench of rotting corpses. Yura’s footsteps were careful while she moved forward. As the distance to the front doors narrowed, she started to detect ‘something.’ She wasn’t mistaken.

[The Demon Slayer’s intuition has felt a strong demonic energy.]

[You will enter the Prepared to Die Posture. The extremely concentrated magic bullets will have a 10% increase in the creation speed and physical defense will increase by 15%. Magic resistance has increased by 20%.]

The passive skill that hadn’t activated when she faced the 32nd Great Demon Belial told Yura something. The gift beyond the door would be much larger than her expectations. Yura gulped and controlled her thoughts. ‘I am over level 300 now.’

This place was also hell. It was a stage that maximized a Demon Slayer’s abilities. The present Yura was incomparable to during the time of the Belial raid. Yura recognized this fact and overcame her

fear, pushing open the door with her small, fine hands. The rusty iron made an unpleasant sound as it was opened, but it was the ‘man’ on the throne in the dark great hall that caused chills to run over Yura’s skin.

“Why are you here?” Yura’s voice trembled as she asked the man sitting on the throne. The last time she was so blatantly shaken had been when she faced Grid.

Why? Grid was the one who always transcended her expectations. Yes, like right now.

“Pagma’s Swordsmanship.”

The man raised his body from the throne. He took one and then two steps forward before dancing. His sharp eyes, reminiscent of a bird of prey, stared at her.

“Transcended Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.”

The atrocious surge of energy moved with a fierce momentum and hit Yura.

“...!!!”

The giant castle that was the symbol of the 32nd Great Demon’s supremacy collapsed like a sand castle.

In the past few years, the Overgeared members had actively utilized Grid’s reputation and abilities. They had called in people by using Grid’s name, and Lael had selected talents to join the Overgeared Guild.

Now, the Overgeared Guild had reached 620 people. It was unbalanced since more than half of them were production-oriented classes. However, it was natural since the ‘army’ of the kingdom meant production classes were more valuable than combat classes.

“All the blacksmiths have contracted with the fire elementals?”

“Yes. Panmir as well.”

“Shit... Why am I the only one with a light elemental? Isn't Pagma's Descendant a blacksmith?” Grid's obsession with the Duke of Fire was greater than imagined. It couldn't be helped since he was pursuing Pagma's shadow.

Lauel soothed the grumbling Grid, “Isn't the light elemental a higher class spirit? I heard that they are elementals of the royal family. Isn't it better than the fire elemental? Be calm and satisfied.”

“I know that. However, it isn't very good if the target isn't of the dark attribute.”

“In't the water elemental a counter for the fire elemental? What result would ever give 100% satisfaction?”

“No, think about it. How convenient would it be if I had a fire elemental? It would be comfortable when I'm making an item and it'd be easy to cook rice while traveling.”

“...You only eat beef jerky anyway.”

Grid's words were just petty grumbles, so Lauel gave up trying to calm Grid and looked outside. Hundreds of Overgeared members were standing before the world tree. Their contracts with the elementals were successful, and they were full of happiness as they cheered for Grid.

“In any case, it is really great. I always admire your performance.”

“Did you sign with an elemental?”

“Of course. I followed the attraction of my soul and communicated with an elemental as soon as I entered the forest.”

As he stared at the laughing Lauel, Grid asked carefully, “Did you contract with a dark spirit?”

“That's right. I hesitated for a moment between the fire and dark

spirit due to the black flame dragon sealed in my arm, but I eventually decided on the dark elemental.”

“Crazy!”

At this point, the game system was creepy. It seemed to penetrate the personality of the target person perfectly. Lael asked for a final confirmation from Grid, “If the Overgeared members team up in groups of eight, they can raid the ancient species called the bear-wolf... Are you sure there is nothing wrong with this command?”

“Yes.”

“Don’t you know that the current full power of the Overgeared members can attempt the Belial raid again?”

“Yes.”

“The bear-wolves are that strong?”

“They are strong. That’s why I’m leaving Mercedes and Jude behind. They will take responsibility for the safety of the guild members when they’re hunting and growing together in the forest.”

“Really... Will you really go alone?”

Grid had declared that he would invade and destroy the city of Merchant King Kir alone. As such, Lael couldn’t help feeling worried. Although Grid had taken care of Kir’s elite knights, there were still thousands of troops left in the city. There would even be hundreds of players. There were also dozens of high rankers who had ties to Kir due to the items he had given them. Did it make sense to be able to defeat them with one person? Despite having a grasp of Grid’s strength, Lael thought it was impossible. The recent growth of the rankers was scary, and the trend was gradually rising.

Grid shrugged. “Don’t worry. I have become much stronger.”

Kir’s chance of escaping had disappeared the moment Agnus

became a legend. He had to shatter Kir to a level that made it impossible for him to recover. This was a natural need when considering Kir's personality.

“I have to hurry. Kir might've already made contact with Agnus.”

The Saharan Empire, Immortal, the Yatan Church, and the great demons...

Grid had no intention of neglecting a variable in the upcoming wars which couldn't be avoided. The determined Grid left the World Tree's Forest and headed for the city of Merchant King Kir.

Chapter 840

[You have suffered catastrophic damage!]

[A legend doesn't die easily. You can resist all attacks for 5 seconds with a minimum of health.]

“U-Ugh!”

In the collapsed wreckage of the castle, Yura's head was dizzy as she barely escaped from the pile of rocks. Why was Grid in a place like this? Why did he attack her? Furthermore, she was driven to death with ‘one blow’? She had never imagined this situation. It was difficult to make a reasonable judgment due to the confusion that surged in like a tsunami. Her willpower was scattered. She didn't know what she was doing, what situation she was in, and what she had to do.

‘No.’ Yura gritted her teeth and regained her composure. Grid didn't have a reason to visit hell at the present time. The opponent who attacked her couldn't be Grid.

That's right.

‘This person isn't Grid.’

Her confusion was settled. Yura moved through the remnants of the castle. Then she confronted the mysterious person who had driven her to death in a single blow.

“Grid...” Yura's eyes widened as she confirmed the name of the mysterious person. The name ‘Grid’ was present on top of the person who looked like Grid. However, the golden shining name made him clearly different from Grid. He had the symbol of a named NPC.

“What is this?”

Why did a named NPC version of Grid exist, and why was he located in hell? In the midst of her growing confusion, Yura made

several hypotheses.

‘Is it Yatan black magic?’ Were they trying to assassinate her for betraying the church? ‘Perhaps there is a demonkin that can copy people’s appearances...’

In any case, he was an enemy. Yura drank a potion and aimed her gun at Grid’s head.

“Question,” the demonkin who borrowed Grid’s appearance spoke in a voice that also resembled Grid’s, “Are you human? Are you the same creature as Grid?”

“...!” The demonkin’s question was enough to increase Yura’s confusion. ‘Do you know Grid?’

Then demonkin’s questions continued. “Surprise. It is the first time I’ve seen a human here.”

“...”

“Question. Can Grid come here?”

He knew about Grid and was obsessed with Grid? Yura heard the question and asked, “Are you looking for someone called Grid?”

“Answer. That’s right.”

“What is your relationship with him?”

“Answer. There is no relationship.”

“Then why are you looking for him?”

“Answer. I have to kill him.”

“Why?”

“Answer. I was born for the sake of killing Grid.”

“You... Who are you?”

“Subtle. Grid?”

“...” Yura’s hair started rising. She felt an extreme fear despite the man in front of her having the same appearance, voice, and

name as Grid. However, she wasn't afraid of him because he was strong. This was a more primitive type of fear. The man cocked his head. "Question. Does our conversation mean anything?"

"..." Yura stepped back. This wasn't an unidentified monster whose ego was incomplete but a bomb that she couldn't deal with. So, she turned around and ran away.

"Pagma's Swordsmanship, Flower." Dozens of energy blades reminiscent of a flower blooming appeared.

"...!!" Yura's vision flashed red. Once again, the blow dealt her a serious injury. Fortunately, her health was still in the unit of 10s. She escaped from the ruins without looking back. However, the man in the hall didn't chase after her. Instead, he returned his rusted sword to its sheath and muttered, "Difficult. Need to find a new home..."

Who was he? He had never thought about it. He only knew that he had to kill Grid.

"I will make it so that the gangster can't piss anymore! Funny, how funny! How are the other rankers so incompetent that they are pushed by that fool?"

There was a small city with a population of 30,000 at the eastern end of the Gauss Kingdom—Penan. It was a city that Merchant King Kir had bought for a large sum of 20 million gold. He had paid 10 billion won in cash, but he hadn't thought it was a waste of money.

If he developed the city as planned, he would be able to withdraw his investment in seven years of game time and turn it into a surplus. Yet it was all wasted now because of Grid. The first large-scale project that would've been a stepping stone for profit had failed due to Grid's interference. This morning, he lost more money than what his city was worth.

Kir resented Grid's 'ignorance' more than his 'evil.'

"Stupid bastard! Doesn't he know that joining hands with me will result in a huge profit for him? Why did he have to make me so tired by becoming my enemy?"

It was always like this. Low intelligence caused disgust to form inside him. In short, Grid was a lump of cancer. Reminded of Grid, Kir was feeling resentful and irritated when he received good news.

"Earl Taru has promised to support with his troops."

"Okay. It is natural." Originally, Penan had been one of Earl Taru's countless cities. The amount of money Kir had given Earl Taru in the process of purchasing Penan was significant. "How much money did I give him? He can't refuse my request if he has a conscience."

Kir was in a dangerous condition because he had lost many troops and three knights to Grid. His top priority was securing as many troops as possible. He had to expand his business quickly to recover the lost money, but this required force. As soon as he resurrected, he had contacted Immortal in order to secure some military strength.

"I didn't think we would meet this way." The door opened and a white-haired man appeared. The man who shook hands with Kir was Veradin.

Merchant King Kir smiled brightly and grabbed Veradin's hand with both hands. "Thank you for accepting the invitation."

"I am the one who should be thankful."

Immortal had lost their place due to the Overgeared Kingdom's killing order. It was hard to find a safe place to go since they were always chased by players. Then they received an invitation from Merchant King Kir. It was a proposal to stay in Kir's city.

Veradin faced Kir and smiled. "Were you hit by Grid?"

“...What?” Kir hadn’t said anything about what he’d gone through and why he had called Immortal. So why did Grid’s name pop up randomly?

Veradin shrugged at the confused Kir. “Aren’t you famous for always putting your best interests first? If you were in a normal situation, you wouldn’t go against Grid by inviting us.”

Yes, Kir wouldn’t do anything against Grid unless he was an idiot. That’s why Veradin guessed that Kir had already been hit by Grid. Kir sighed deeply. “Well... I didn’t intend to hide it. Your guess is right. I was hit by that damn Grid and have a debt to repay.”

Veradin’s eyes shone. “Interesting. Why don’t you tell me more?”

“The beginning started with...”

Kir needed Immortal’s cooperation and was obliged to make them a perfect ally. So, he explained in detail about what happened to him. However, he reduced the amount of damage he’d suffered and hid his relationship with the Yatan Church. Then the lengthy explanation ended.

“Yes. You went through a lot of trouble. You also suffered damage from the villain called Grid. Okay. Immortal will stay here and help you. Victims should help each other. Otherwise, who will help us?” Veradin gave Kir a satisfactory answer. “We will make this place our base and reserve our strength. Immortal will do our best to carry out your instructions.”

“Good. I will also support Immortal by providing items. By the way... what about Agnus?”

In fact, it was because of Agnus that Kir first thought about Immortal. The world message which spoke about Agnus becoming a legend gave Kir hope. He assumed that it would be easier to get revenge on Grid if he had Agnus. However, he couldn’t see Agnus

here at all. He was feeling troubled by how Veradin responded like it was nothing, “Isn’t Agnus famous? At this moment, he is freely wandering the continent and enjoying the moment.”

“What about the kill order?”

“What is the use of a kill order against him? Who would dare to hurt Agnus apart from Grid directly?”

“Haha! I see.”

“Yes, don’t worry. Agnus will arrive after we deal with the miscellaneous matters.”

That was a lie. Veradin had lost Agnus’ trust due to the Reinhardt invasion, so Agnus’ attitude was now very different from the past. He didn’t leave any tasks to Veradin and completely neglected Immortal. However, Veradin couldn’t reveal this fact. It was obvious that Immortal would be nothing without Agnus. Additionally, he believed that Agnus would find him again someday.

“Shall we talk about future plans?”

“First of all, I will raise money. I will gather money from all types of commercial areas, regardless of means and methods. I will then develop talent and weapons.”

“Is this to defend yourself against Grid?”

“That isn’t enough. I must take everything away from Grid.”

“Haha! It is a great mindset. Okay. Let’s join forces to flatten Grid.”

“Is it enough to flatten Grid? We will destroy everything. Hahaha!”

The sound of the two men’s laughter filled the colorfully decorated office.

The two men planned to get revenge on Grid and believed it was fully feasible. After all, the stronger the Overgeared Kingdom

became, the more people became jealous of them. Thus, Kir and Veradin were confident that they could trample on the Overgeared Kingdom.

This was something Grid and Lael were concerned about. They couldn't give any room to people who had already become enemies.

“K-Kir!”

“Veradin! He came!”

“...?”

The cheerfully laughing Veradin and Kir closed their mouths and stiffened at the same time. Their faces turned pale as their rushing colleagues explained the situation.

“What?”

“At that time, I was careless.”

“That's right.”

Boutian and Arisa—the two high rankers belonging to Merchant King Kir's forces—replayed the fight in the forest.

“It was a shame when I tried to use magic to blow him away. It would've been enough to tie up his feet.”

If he had blocked the movements that were required for Pagma's Swordsmanship, Grid's power would've been weakened by several times. They had analyzed Grid's weak points in the National Competition videos but hadn't been able to utilize them due to their greed.

Boutian was filled with frustration while Arisa confessed honestly, “We made a lot of mistakes. I was too conscious of Blackening and got caught off guard. It would've been easier if I did my best from the beginning...”

Then Tarot, who was sitting quietly between the two people, laughed. “You should’ve taken me along. I would’ve been able to hunt Grid easily. Isn’t that right?”

Tarot was someone with Blackening, like Grid. He had gained a mighty power during a great demon quest and evolved into a half-demonkin. Even Boutian and Arisa were deeply regretful that he hadn’t encountered Grid at this time.

“Ah, it was a chance to hunt him and get bonuses.”

“It couldn’t be helped. You had a separate mission.”

“That was a mistake in the first place. If you waited until my mission ended, you wouldn’t have gone through such humiliation... Huh?” Tarot was blaming Kir’s stupidity when he let out a sound of confusion. He rubbed his eyes a few times before pointing at the gate.

“Isn’t that Grid?”

“What?”

Boutian and Arisa frowned at the same time. They thought that Tarot was joking in this serious atmosphere. Tarot licked his lips like he had a delicious meal in front of him. “Ah, how bad is a human’s vision? It has been a few months since I’ve been a human, so I have forgotten.”

“What are you doing?”

It was too much to fool around. Boutian and Arisa became confused as Tarot suddenly used Blackening. Unfortunately, Tarot wasn’t joking right now. He pulled out a red sword and jumped toward the gate. Then a white sword of light flew and pierced his brow.

“...Eh?” Tarot was stunned as he lost half his health from the one blow. He lost his momentum and fell helplessly. Then a man passed by him, and Tarot was hit with hundreds of energy blades and turned to gray.

Boutian and Arise hurriedly shouted, “E-Emergency!”

“Gather the entire army right now!”

“100,000 Army Massacre Sword.”

“...!!”

Alarm bells rang as a wild beast appeared in the city.

Chapter 841

TL: Please read this [announcement](#). I am specifically posting it at the top to ensure that people read it.

Satisfy boasted freedom that went beyond reality and had a vast worldview that was close to infinite. It would take years to explore the continent and find the unique food of each region. However, humans pursued their own path.

Some people enjoyed Satisfy in a way that was no different from existing games. They were typical rankers, who were obsessed with maintaining their ranking or reaching a higher ranking. This meant they spent most of their time connected to Satisfy in hunting grounds. They abandoned the ordinary content that others enjoyed and focused on hunting. Thanks to their efforts, they became rankers and could earn wealth and honor.

However, Grid was different.

[Name: Grid

Level: 362

Class: Pagma's Descendant (Conditional Great Magician)

Title: One who Became a Legend and 25 others (If you want to view the list, please click for a detailed view)

Health: 88,815 Mana: 14,268

Strength: 3,160 (+360)

Stamina: 1,987 (+580)

Agility: 2,690 (+330)

Intelligence: 1,838 (+540)

Dexterity: 3,547 (+880)

Persistence: 1,472 (+330)

Composure: 1,078 (+330)

Indomitable: 1,333 (+440)

Dignity: 1,986 (+330)

Insight: 1,826 (+330)

Courage: 1,022 (+330)

Political Power: 21 (+330)

Demonic Power: 15,498

Good Luck: 241

Deity: 4

Remaining Stat Points: 267]

Compared to normal rankers, Grid spent a very small amount of time hunting. In fact, he spent most of his time in the smithy and suffered from various incidents. So, logically, he shouldn't have such a high level. Yet Grid's level was still in the single digit rankings. How...?

He was linked to various NPCs and was at the center of the world view. In the process, he had raided powerful bosses or cleared hidden quests. Grid had gained the same experience in a single raid that others would spend 100 days of hunting for. This was due to him building up relationships with NPCs.

However, other people didn't know this.

"100,000 Army Massacre Sword."

There was an explosion followed by dozens of energy blades filling the air. The Penan soldiers who ran in response to Boutian's and Arisa's cries all turned to gray. The number was well over 200.

"You damn son of a bit—...!" Boutian shuddered as he witnessed the soldiers, who had been trained using Merchant King Kir's money and their efforts, disappear due to the overwhelming firepower. He was resentful that he had overlooked the 'personal

power' of Grid, who had the position of king and yet still retained the top ranking.

'I should've expected him to chase us here! He is a diligent guy who only eats and plays games!'

In fact, Boutian played Satisfy for an average of 12 hours a day. He spent most of the time at the hunting grounds, apart from when he was carrying out Kir's orders. Even so, he had never dreamt of reaching the single-digit rankings. His highest ranking was in the top 100. He thought that Grid was likely to spend all his time eating and playing games.

'If only I was 10 years younger...!'

It was frustrating that his body had weakened once he reached his 40s. Envious of Grid's youth, Boutian shouted, "Full force! Build a barricade!"

Despite witnessing 200 troops being wiped out with a single skill, Boutian didn't despair. He still had hope because there were too many advantages when it came to defending a city.

There was the help of various facilities. A typical example of this was the barricades which were installed in various parts of the city. The soldiers lined them up in a row so that the attacker would have to first break through the barricades while the soldiers could attack freely.

Boutian smiled with satisfaction. "Overgeared King! You came to your grave on your own! You will forever regret today's stupidity!"

He was naturally aware that Grid could break the barricades with his high attack power, but the blow would have to be heavy. While Grid attacked the barricade, the archers and magicians should be able to hit Grid dozens of times. In a perfect environment, the numerical advantage was absolute. It was clearly common sense.

"Magic Missile."

"What?"

The God Hands fired white missiles one per second, and the barricades installed throughout the city broke down.

“Lightning, nyang!” A cat flew to the soldiers and used a wide-range lightning spell, causing the soldiers to collapse. The guards collapsed in a flash, causing Boutian to coordinate the archers hurriedly. “Hurry!”

“Revolve.” Randy duplicated Grid’s appearance and reflected all the arrows.

“Kuock...!”

“Ugh...!”

The archers were pierced by arrows and fell!

“What is this?” Boutian and the magicians cast magic belatedly, but it was too late.

“Do you think I would’ve come alone if I was going to be hit by such shallow tricks?” Grid avoided the magic using Freely Move and reached Boutian’s side instantly.

[You have suffered catastrophic damage!]

[Your spirit can’t endure it!]

“Cough!” Boutian’s health gauge dropped to less than half when he was hit by the Enlightenment Sword. Due to Grid’s attack, he was stunned and became unable to do anything. During this moment, he was hit by creepily smiling skeletons.

[You have dealt 509 damage to the target!]

[You have suffered 480 damage!]

Boutian was stabbed by a short dagger. As the soldiers rushed over to protect him, Boutian roared angrily, “You! Are you looking down on me by not finishing me off yourself?”

The finishing blow was going to be left to these small fries? Boutian was in shock as he shouted angrily. Then the insignificant

attack power of the skeleton's dagger, which had failed to penetrate Boutian's defense, now caused a stunning critical hit.

[Your ribs have been broken!]

[It is serious damage! Skills can't be used! Your spirit can't endure it. Movement speed is reduced! Health recovery is reduced by 80%!]

[You have taken medicine for broken bones.]

[The effect of the medicine isn't working.]

[You need the best medicine for broken bones.]

"What?" A chill ran down Boutian's spine. Grid was currently slaughtering the soldiers while ignoring Boutian. The golden hands, the cat, the doppelganger, and the skeletons... None of them were ordinary. Grid monopolized the strongest items and pets alone, while other players would be happy with just one. Due to this, there was one major problem.

"Ugh..!"

Grid's individual power was enough to overwhelm two and three digit high rankers, including Arisa. Boutian was convinced of this as he watched Arisa while being stabbed by the skeletons.

'...It is enough to transcend the category of a player.'

Grid transcended the category of an 'individual.' He was an army, a giant that couldn't fall. There was only one choice remaining. Boutian judged that the remaining forces wouldn't be able to stop Grid and gave an order before dying, "Shit! Army... full force! Keok!"

However, it was an Immortal's necromancer who killed him, not the Overgeared Skeletons.

"I can't miss this great opportunity." The necromancers smiled as they raised the dead bodies all over the place. Today was different from when they were in the empress' palace as the Black

and White sisters were present.

“It has been a long time, damn bastard.”

“Today is a chance to get revenge.”

The sun-grade players who once represented Blood Carnival...! They had abandoned Blood Carnival a long time ago and hid from the world after joining Immortal.

There was a fierce wave of energy as Black and White sisters burned off fat and summoned clones. They had raged with the desire to take revenge against Grid, Faker, and even Grid’s son, Lord, as they raised their levels while hunting for several months. After doing so, they were now confident that they had become strong enough to shatter Grid. In particular, Kir and Immortal were supporting them, so they were sure it would be easy to repel Grid.

“Dieeeeeeee!”

It was finally time to get revenge. After blowing away the Overgeared Skeletons with one blow, Black’s clones and White headed toward Grid. They quickly reached Grid who was dealing with the soldiers. However, this was no different from suicide.

“Blackening.” When Grid discovered the Black and White sisters, he used a skill without delay.

“Open the Rune of Darkness, Weakened Great Demon Astaroth’s Power.”

“...!!”

“Storm Demonic Energy Field.”

From the beginning, the sky had been overcast. As such, Grid selected ‘today’ because of the weather. The power of the great demon immediately caused four to eleven lightning strikes per second to strike in a radius of 200 meters around Grid. The sisters and soldiers hit by the lightning received 10,000 fixed damage and

were paralyzed, stunned, burned, and so on.

“Eek! What nonsensical item is this?”

Fortunately, Black avoided the paralysis and stun. She gritted her teeth and endured the pain. A player could summon a field...? There was no way that this power could be a skill. Now he wasn't a player but a boss. White was convinced that Grid had used a consumable item to overcome the current crisis.

“Overgeared jerk!” White barely moved her heavy body under the wind pressure as she avoided the lightning and rushed to Grid. It was a blow containing all her strength. However, it was virtually impossible for the blackened Grid to be hit by Black and White after the field slowed them down and reduced their accuracy rate.

Grid easily avoided White's blow, which contained her anger and grudges, before slashing at her. Then he continued to attack until the sun-grade player died.

“Sister!” Black was in despair as her clones became paralyzed whenever lightning struck. The two suns were equally under the new sky.

Chapter 842

[Your party member, White, has died.]

“Sister!”

In an alleyway that was far from the center of the battlefield, Black turned pale as she hid in a safe place while controlling her clones. Her proud sister, who had steadily raised her level and equipped herself with legendary items after vowing to get revenge on Grid and the Overgeared members, had actually been killed in less than two minutes.

Black stared at Grid as her clones were stunned by the lightning strikes, and a chill ran down her spine.

‘The gap between us has widened rather than narrowed?’

Every game had limits. Growth would slow after a certain level. The growth of low-level players was much faster than high-level players. Players with low-rated items were more likely to develop than those with a large number of high-rated items. As such, it was expected for the growth rate of the top ranker Grid to be much slower than others’ since he had been wielding legendary items from the very beginning.

Then what was this strength? The current Grid was transcendent compared to last year, let alone the National Competition that had been held several months ago.

“...Surely he didn’t obtain myth rated items?”

No, it was impossible. Finding a myth-rated item was harder than plucking a star from the sky.

Black shook her skinny face as she confirmed that the resources consumed by Illusion Manifestation had finally recovered. Then she immediately used her ultimate technique, Illusion World. She intended to alter the field that Grid had summoned and make it hurt him instead.

[Your illusions have twisted reality.]

[You have lost 4.7% experience as a penalty for using the great power, Illusion World.]

[The target point of Illusion World is already dominated by a huge power!]

[The target's presence neutralizes your illusions.]

[Illusion World has failed to manifest!]

“...What?”

A long time ago, Grid had faced Black and speculated that her class was legendary-grade.

Seeing as he had met many strong players, Grid's vision was excellent. So he knew that in fact, Illusionist was a growth type hidden class that could grow to the legendary rating. Black's level was still low due to the large penalties that occurred every time she used a skill, so the class was still at the unique rating. However, the fact that it was a top class was undeniable.

An Illusionist's illusions had an influence on most targets. Even if the opponent had a legendary class, they were still helpless in front of the illusions that Black summoned at the cost of her experience. However, this excluded targets like archangels, great demons, and transcendents like the yangbans. They resisted the unique-rated Illusionist. It was necessary to upgrade to the legendary rating if she wanted to influence them.

Yes, there were the limitations of rare targets like archangels, great demons, and yangbans, but a unique-rated Illusionist should still be able to exert absolute power over a player. Yet it was impossible to exert absolute power over Grid.

“What is this...?”

Despite consuming the resources and experience, the ultimate technique was neutralized! Black was astonished by the painful

loss when she heard Grid's voice. He was speaking directly to Black's illusion clone, "You sisters haven't grown at all. Did you quit the game for a while?"

"You bastard!"

Quit the game for a while? How hard had they tried to grow from the last time they appeared? They had many stories of hard work and effort.

"You don't know anything!" The angry Black commanded the illusions who overcame their paralysis and stun to launch a full-scale attack. The illusions copied the characteristics of the ideal strong person, Faker, and rushed toward Grid. Black believed that a copy of the monster Faker would be able to handle Grid, since he had defeated her despite having a normal class. There was a basis for this idea. Grid had consumed all types of skills while dealing with Kir's troops and White and then acted like he was tired.

In reality...

'It consumes too much mana.'

Grid could no longer maintain the Storm Demonic Energy Field that consumed 1,000 mana per second. The Ring of Absurdity that he'd gotten from Black in the past reduced the mana cost of the skill by half, but the problem was that Grid's mana base was too small. However, Grid didn't feel regretful. The Storm Demonic Energy Field massacred hundreds of soldiers in exchange for consuming a large amount of mana!

"Hihi! Hihihik! Die! Die! Dieeee!" Three beauties holding daggers in their hands flew toward Grid at the same time. Their speed was very fast as they moved from left to right around the soldiers. It was reminiscent of the third advancement assassin class, Master of Swiftiness. For a moment, Grid was unable to respond, and his arm and waist were cut. The curses and spells of Kir's magicians and the necromancers interfered with Grid's concentration and movements.

“Kyahat! Kuhihihit!” Black let out delighted laughter when she saw Grid’s wounds.

Meanwhile, her illusions continued to rotate and stab at him.

Grid defended against the magic bombardment with the God Hands and equipped the Slaughterer’s Eye Patch. It was then that the attack accuracy of the clones dropped noticeably. This was because Grid borrowed the power of the Slaughterer’s Eye Patch and started to read their attack orbit.

“Tch!” The emotions of the main body were conveyed to the clones. Black became annoyed as Grid started to avoid attacks like a rodent. She urged Immortal’s necromancers, “Why are you not covering me? Move the skeletons to seal his movements! Why are men so useless?”

“...”

The influence of White and Black in Immortal was very large since Veradin had recruited them himself.

Although the necromancers felt great dissatisfaction toward the women who treated them badly because they were men, they couldn’t express it. In the first place, they would lick shit if it meant taking down Grid. They didn’t intend to miss this opportunity to catch Grid.

Clack! Clack clack! The undead army started these activities in earnest. The bodies of the soldiers were raised and started pushing at Grid. Due to them, Grid’s movements were greatly restricted, and Black’s attack accuracy started to rise again. Alas, there was a problem.

[You have dealt 2,100 damage to the target!]

[You have dealt 1,860 damage to the target!]

[You have dealt 1,990...]

.....

.....

It was Grid's ridiculously high defense.

Black's illusions were armed with unique-rated weapons enhanced to +7. Black summoned them in exchange for experience but failed to inflict damage on Grid as the performance of the armor that Grid was armed with was far superior. It wouldn't be strange if it was at least +8 enhanced armor.

However, Black was still optimistic about the situation. Even water droplets could eventually damage rocks. The low damage would continue to accumulate, and Grid would eventually fall down. Black believed that after the storm field and Blackening was lifted, Grid would be damaged by her illusions and die.

It was at this time that...

Clack clack! Clack!

The hundreds of skeletons summoned by the necromancers surrounded Grid completely. With nowhere to go after being surrounded by undead and illusions, it was virtually impossible for Grid to avoid the attacks. It was a perfect defensive move.

"Hihit! Hihihik! This is the end!"

"Die! Grid!!"

The attacks of the necromancers and Black poured down like rain.

"Wave."

In response, Grid used a wide-range skill. The waves of energy spread out in all directions and hit the undead and Black's illusions simultaneously. The reason why he had deliberately been acting on the defensive was so he could get rid of Black's illusions using Quick Movements.

"The number of skill uses is limited."

He had to kill as many enemies as possible with one skill. Grid

broke through the collapsing undead army and chased after Black's illusions to wipe them out.

[The illusion summoned with Illusion Manifestation has been damaged and has vanished.]

[20% experience has been lost.]

"Unbelievable!" Black was hiding deep in an alley. Her eyes shook violently as she suffered a huge penalty from her illusions being destroyed. It was then that she finally regained the senses she'd lost after witnessing her sister's death.

'No! I can't win!'

Her sister hadn't even been able to survive two minutes against Grid, so what could Black do? Black settled her spirit and turned to escape. Then a lovely voice spoke out from behind her, "I found you, nyang."

She turned back and...

"Noe!"

It was the memphis famous for having more fan cafe members than Grid. Black's sister had secretly signed up for the fan cafe, and Noe was even cuter now after his fur changed in color. Nevertheless, to Noe, she was just the enemy. Moreover, she even dared threaten his master!

"I'm going to eat, nyang."

The small '人' snout expanded and swallowed up Black.

[Your pet, Noe, has ingested the soul of the player, Black.]

[He has taken away half of the target's highest stat!]

[Intelligence has increased by 2,131.]

[You understand the knowledge and magic of Braham.]

[The skill Fireball (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Dark Cutter (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Chain Lightning (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Enchant Weapon (Enhanced) can be used.]

[The skill Decoy (Enhanced) can be used.]

“Phew.”

Grid swapped over to Belial’s Staff. He also took off Triple Layers that he had been temporarily wearing to tank the attacks and switched to Valhalla of Infinite Affection. At this moment, Merchant King Kir and Veradin appeared leading a large number of reinforcements.

“Keep pushing!” Veradin shouted after calmly analyzing the situation, unlike Kir who was making a fuss over the mess in the city. Then Veradin confirmed that Grid had a fairly reduced health gauge due to the overwhelming advantage of numbers and the activities of the White and Black sisters.

‘This time I will kill you!’

The new start here in Penan was a brilliant opportunity from Veradin’s and Immortal’s standpoint. Veradin planned to use this counterattack against Grid to provide the foundations of their resurgence. The death knight famous for his poison was summoned, and his breaths poisoned the whole area. Determination filled Veradin’s eyes. He still hadn’t given up his dream of becoming a resident of the Hwan Kingdom as he gave orders to the poisonous death knight and Immortal.

“Kill Grid!”

Grid had already used many skills, so he should be lacking in skills since Pagma’s Swordsmanship had the disadvantage of a long cooldown time. Veradin was feeling confident about this when incomprehensible words entered his ears.

“Enchant Weapon. Chain Lightning.”

Magic? Why did magic a few levels higher than Magic Missile pop

out of Grid's mouth? Before Veradin could figure it out, lightning struck the necromancers' undead army, Kir's soldiers, Veradin, and Veradin's death knight.

[You have suffered 19,000 damage!]

[You have received an electric shock!]

[You have overcome the electric shock with the effect of overcoming death...]

“Kuk...! Kuaaaack!”

The Chain Lightning reached a distance of 100 meters? Furthermore, this strength was on par with high-level magic!

“Why... Why are you...?” Why did he break the predictions every time? “How are you growing?” Veradin screamed as a huge fireball filled his vision.

Kir was unable to close his mouth as he saw Veradin disappear into a pillar of gray ash.

‘From the beginning...’ The first day that Kir met Grid... ‘I should’ve prostrated myself before him!’

Kir couldn’t even breathe. He was filled with regret, but it was already too late. In Grid’s mind, the ‘Merchant King’ was Muto, rather than Kir.

Chapter 843

TL: Please check the updated [announcement post](#) if you haven't already. I got the dates wrong with the first post and updated it.

The undead were never weak pets. They had the fundamental limit of low intelligence, but they would perform any command unconditionally. Another advantage was that they had no emotions or common sense. What about how their agility and durability which were relatively lower than those of other species? This was a problem that could be overcome by evolving into a higher undead.

In fact, the speed of the skeleton warrior was just a bit slow. Its durability was also considerably strengthened. Skeleton warriors were great pets to fight one-on-one with players of the same level. Considering the fact that a second advancement necromancer could summon skeleton warriors and a number of skeletons, a necromancer was a very favorable combat class.

Still, this was just referring to general hunting or PK. A necromancer was a vulnerable class when it came to boss raids. It was virtually impossible for the undead's attack and durability to defeat a boss monster's extremely high defense and attack power.

“...Should we just surrender?”

The elite necromancers of Immortal lost their fighting spirit as the new Grid was a boss monster itself. They were convinced that they would never be able to beat Grid with their abilities.

“He is a X monster!” The level 245 necromancer Kakron trembled. He had been playing hard like everyone else, but he just couldn't knock down Grid who was facing thousands of people alone. Kakron felt a great sense of deprivation, and curse words had popped out unknowingly. Despite this, there wasn't a single person who agreed with him.

The 7th ranked necromancer Drew reproached him, “What bullshit are you saying? Do you deserve to complain? You have a lower level than everyone here and your equipment isn’t great. It means you will lose a lot less. Didn’t you put in less time, less money, and less effort? Do you have any sense?”

“...”

“Shut up if you have a brain. Don’t claim more things than necessary.” Drew’s strong anger and spite were also directed toward himself. Drew had been watching Grid, Kraugel, and Agnus for a while. He knew what Satisfy players had to do to become a top player.

Was it having the patience to hunt for a few days in one place? Was it having the power to purchase the best items? Was it having the good luck to cope with financial difficulties? No. Those alone weren’t enough. It was the ability to continuously generate and link hidden quests. Those who could use Satisfy’s infinite degree of freedom to pass through episodes made them qualified to be a top player.

Yet Drew had never achieved it. He didn’t know the details of when, where, and whom to meet. What choices did he have to make to experience a hidden episode or quest? Drew didn’t know because there was a clear limit to his thinking ability.

“...This damn monster.” There was no hatred in Drew’s eyes as he watched Grid single-handedly kill Veradin, followed by the annihilation of the soldiers and the undead army. There was only awe.

“How smart is he?”

Was Grid a game genius? Did he keep experiencing new episodes and make rapid progress while performing hidden quests? It was a talent that Drew wanted to take away.

“Hah...” Drew was unable to overcome his frustration and was

sighing deeply when he received Veradin's whisper.

-Veradin: I'm sorry I was killed without doing anything. I am now at the resurrection point. I will be sure to join you again, so use Kir's soldiers as a shield. Let's catch Grid today.

"Hat!" Drew laughed. He smiled wryly as he replied.

-Drew: You are going to rejoin us? You?

-Veradin: What is the meaning of your words?

-Drew: You hate dying. Don't you think I know that you are doing a quest where you can't die?

-Veradin: Your guess doesn't make sense. What player likes to die? I'm just trying to protect myself from dying? What type of quest are you talking about?

-Drew: The difference before and after you came back from the continent is too big.

-Veradin: ...Are you sure?

-Drew: Jerk! I already got the information about your separate exit! Do you think we are idiots?

-Veradin: ...

-Drew: Based on your reaction, you must've already arrived there?

There was the entrance to a waterway which existed underneath Kir's castle. Veradin had been planning to leave the city through the waterway while Immortal bought time. He stiffened once he arrived at the entrance. It was because the 2nd ranked Bullet was waiting for him there.

The usually gentle Bullet was enraged. "I followed you because I recognized your skills and believed in the accomplishments you showed me. In the end, are we just tools to be discarded by you?"

"...So what? Do you want me to give you something special? Me?

To an ordinary person like you?” Veradin spoke in a proud manner. Then he drove the nail in, “I gathered you together because I wanted to be recognized by Agnus. I wanted him to treat me as a useful person and become qualified to stay by his side in order to observe his madness.”

[Hwan Kingdom’s Resident (1)]

[★ Hidden Quest ★]

You have to meet the minimal qualifications to challenge the Chiyou test.

First, go beyond the level of an ordinary person.

Quest Clear Condition (1): Don’t die until you reach level 400.

* Every time you gain 20 levels without dying while the quest is ongoing, you will gain a large number of additional stats.

* If you die, you will lose all the additional stats you have acquired. The lost stats can’t be restored.

* If you die, the quest clear conditions will change to number two.

Quest Clear Condition (2): The number of deaths must be less than five until you achieve level 400 (Number of Deaths: 4/5).

* This is the last chance. If you fail to complete the second clear conditions, you will completely lose your qualification to challenge the Chiyou test.]

There was no more turning back for Veradin. He was half-abandoned by Agnus who wasn’t actually crazy, and Immortal was pulling him down rather than helping him. Veradin had only one life left, so he had to defend himself. He had to get out of here quickly.

Tsk! He clicked his tongue as he pulled up the list of guild members. Veradin intended to expel Bullet and Drew using his authority over the guild. He planned to stop them from inciting

the other guild members and give them the expulsion penalty. However, unlike Veradin, Bullet and Drew had been acting for the guild with true sincerity. So, the members' sentiment was with them.

[You have been impeached from your position as guild leader due to the vote of the guild members!]

[Guild leader Bullet has expelled you from the guild!]

“You—!”

The system interpreted that a ‘serious sin that can’t be forgiven’ had been committed as the reason why a guild member was expelled from a guild. Due to this, a penalty was incurred.

[You have been expelled from the guild and have become a fugitive!]

[There is a punishment for your sin. If you are arrested by a former guild member, the imprisonment sentence will increase. If killed, the death penalty will increase by 20%. This penalty is limited to one time.]

“This is... This is like being bitten by a dog I raised.”

Immortal was his force! These guys did nothing, even Agnus! Veradin's voice shook angrily as he raised his head and shouted, “Summon! Death Knight!”

Veradin was in an extreme state of anxiety. He had to keep in mind that the necromancers who betrayed him might surrender to Grid and lead him to this place.

‘I have to leave here quickly!’

Veradin commanded his death knight to kill Bullet.

“Summon, Death Knight.” In response, Bullet also summoned a death knight. The unexpected battle between the first and second-ranked necromancers began.

“Dammit! How do I fix this?”

Unlike what was known in the past, had Grid been a magician before he changed to Pagma's Descendant? As Grid suddenly started using magic to kill the soldiers, Kir felt a sense of discomfort. This was because the undead army that rose again had started to retreat from Grid.

‘Is there a separate operation?’

Veradin might’ve died in vain, but Immortal had many necromancer rankers besides Veradin. Kir relied on Immortal sincerely. He thought that when they cooperated with his troops, there would be a chance to win against Grid who was becoming tired. Yet a strange phenomenon occurred. The undead army gained a bit of distance from Grid before suddenly collapsing and returning to the earth.

“What is the problem?”

“...”

Kir shouted toward Immortal, but there was no response. No one answered Kir’s call. Bit by bit, little by little, the Immortal members stepped back while trying not to catch Grid’s attention. Kir cried out, “You dared come here only to one-sidedly destroy the alliance?”

His eyes blazed with anger.

“The person who made the alliance with you just left the guild,” Drew explained as he came up to Kir. “That jerk Veradin abandoned the guild and moved alone. We no longer have a reason to fight.”

“...I don’t know the details but aren’t you being too relaxed? You have already attacked Grid. Do you think Grid will take care of you because you aren’t fighting? In the end, you have to fight in order to survive. Stop talking nonsense and summon the undead again. Stop the monster called Grid along with the soldiers.”

Drew shrugged at Kir, who barely contained the curse words that wanted to emerge because of his frustration. “Of course, I don’t believe it will be easy. However, I am already prepared.”

“...?”

“In the future, we will die until Grid’s anger is released. I just hope that Grid can release it quickly.”

“You will go that far?”

Drew replied to Kir’s question, “Isn’t that the only answer? Haven’t you noticed yet? Is Grid an enemy we can go against at our level?”

“...”

The last spell finally exploded. Grid destroyed dozens of soldiers with just one Fireball, put away his staff, and pulled out his sword. His period of raised intelligence caused by Soul Ingestion was over, and his mana was completely exhausted. He could no longer act as a magician. Despite this, to Immortal and Kir, it seemed like Grid was just ‘playing’ around.

“He isn’t satisfied slaughtering with magic, so he is using a sword again...”

Kir listened to Drew’s analysis and gulped. He was on the verge of losing his fighting spirit. Then Arisa rushed to Kir’s side. “Grid is quite tired and his stamina will be low. I am sure that he can be cornered right now. Isn’t Tarot coming?”

The half-demonkin Tarot was the most expensive person hired by Kir’s Company. He had been killed by a surprise attack right after Grid appeared, but Arisa didn’t doubt that his fighting spirit would be high after he resurrected. Kir met Arisa’s hopeful eyes and shook his head with a bitter expression. “He hasn’t replied to my whispers.”

“...” Arisa fell silent.

The reason why she hadn't lost hope was that she believed in Tarot's power. Why would Tarot suddenly not reply? The hope that filled her scattered in vain. Grid was approaching. Whenever he took one step, dozens of soldiers were turned to gray. The power of the intermittent black flame explosions was amazing. It was an infinitely activated skill.

They didn't know what the structure of Grid's skill tree was like. So, in the end, Kir was forced to put down everything. He ordered Arisa to stop the troops and approached Grid. "This is a one-sided invasion, a cruel massacre. If today's disaster is revealed, public opinion toward you will worsen. There will be all types of accusations."

It was a threat that was meant to end this situation. No matter how mighty the forces were, 'standing alone' would cause fear. As such, Kir wanted to negotiate, but unfortunately, his intimidation didn't work.

Grid scoffed and tilted his chin toward a distant place. "Do you think I just came here to play? Some crazy guy used Blackening and rushed at me. Then the soldiers attacked? I was just defending myself when Immortal popped up? All those things are now being streamed live."

"...!" The surprised Kir turned his gaze in the direction that Grid indicated. The world's most famous game BJ, Bunny Bunny, waved to him. Grid's eyes became cold. "The cost of challenging me is very great."

"Ick...! Eeek!" Kir just wanted to protect his minimum rights. Now his eyes turned yellow as he heard Grid's words.

Chapter 844

Grid was as aggressive as he was strong, and he wasn't wise as he was intoxicated with his own power. He was the type of person who was blinded by immediate gains and lost the bigger profits. His cruel violence expressed in the name of decisiveness was enough to cause disgust, and he was perfect at antagonizing people.

So far, this was Kir's evaluation of Grid. Right now, Grid reigned with a strong force, but he would become isolated and be destroyed sooner than expected. Kir didn't expect Grid to last for very long. Nevertheless, what was the truth? Kir's spine became freezing cold as he saw Bunny Bunny. He was forced to evaluate Grid differently.

‘He is clever!’

No, Grid wasn't smart. It was clearly the influence of Lael, who founded the Overgeared Kingdom. There was no weakness in Grid with the genius called Lael behind him. After Kir realized that Grid had decided to take away everything he owned, he experienced a deep frustration and lost all hope. He fell into despair and questioned it, “What's the difference between you and me?”

“...?”

“At least I didn't slaughter the elves. I didn't kill a single elf until you interrupted me. On the other hand, what about you? Now you have slaughtered hundreds of soldiers in dozens of minutes. What? You respect NPCs? You are better than me because I took the elves as prisoners? A murderer like you hates me and rescued the elves?”

“Oh, it is an obvious story.”

“...?”

Many years ago, Grid was performing a time attack quest to wipe out Pope Candidate Pascal and the Vatican elders, causing him to

overlook the deaths of prostitutes. The prostitutes had been used as shields to threaten Grid, but he had ignored them and they were then killed by the elders.

No, let's go back in time further than that. On the first day he encountered Khan, Grid casually killed the local gangsters who threatened him and Khan.

"I have my own standards. I never said that I respect all NPCs." Grid was someone who agonized over and over about the existence of NPCs. He pointed to the civilians hiding in the streets. "Look. I didn't kill those people."

"You—!" It was impossible to intimidate or even criticize Grid. His deep selfishness meant that not even these words had an effect. Kir became less composed. His eyes became bloodstained as he shouted, "You! Do you think you are a god? How can you be so selfish?"

Grid doubted his ears. "What are you saying? Aren't you the one who thinks you are a god?"

"...?"

"Haven't you been acting like one? You captured weak people without hesitation. You did this because you thought you were a god."

"S-Sophistry!"

"Yes, it's sophistry. Don't make a broad analysis of a simple matter."

"I am what?" Kir found it hard to understand the Korean manner of speaking. Kir frowned while Grid aimed a sword at his neck and declared, "Stop your attacks now."

"???" What nonsense was Grid saying? Kir was stunned. Why was the one-sided slaughterer telling him to stop attacking? "Shouldn't I say that to you?"

“No, don’t I have the right to defend myself? Stop the attacks. Then I will stop mine.”

‘This jerk!’

Grid was conscious of the camera right till the end. Acting like a victim, he was being really hateful right now. Still, Grid gave Kir one last chance. “Please surrender. Then I will leave this city without taking it away from you.”

“...” It was just the city. In other words, he would take away everything outside the city. Kir wasn’t particularly surprised. He had expected Grid to come here with that type of mindset. “...Are you going to take away all my merchandise?”

“Yes.”

“This is beyond common sense. One day, the world will discover what you have done to me and criticize you. Then the Overgeared Kingdom might become isolated.”

“I know.”

All types of maneuvers would occur before the Overgeared Kingdom was established. Many forces wanted to take away the Overgeared Kingdom’s rice bowl because they were strong, so there would be an alliance that would try to destroy the Overgeared Guild. The threat would come anyway, so it was better to become stronger than to sit silently and wait.

“It will be dangerous if you are left alone. It is better to take your life and make it so that you are unable to recover. This is from the position of the Overgeared Kingdom. Do you understand?”

“...” Kir didn’t say anything because he agreed with Grid. In the first place, he had also taken things away from other people in case they would strike at him again someday. Ultimately, Kir’s goal was to keep his trading rights. So, after careful consideration, Kir displayed the wit of a merchant. “I understand. I will follow your demands.”

“Hoh?”

“Only...”

“Only?”

“I want you to promise not to take away any trading rights that I gain in the future.”

If he was forced to lose it, then he would give it to Grid. Instead, there should be a promise for his future. Grid thought for a moment before nodding. “Yes. Let’s write up a contract.”

In fact, Grid hadn’t known that Kir would listen to his demands. He had expected to spend a great deal of time and money in order to steal the merchant’s commerce rights which were bound in the form of a ‘contract.’ Yet Kir was willing to give it all at once. Moreover, it was also good for Grid to guarantee Kir’s future.

‘If he loses everything and has to start again from the beginning, he won’t grow fast enough to threaten the Overgeared Kingdom.’

Grid removed his sword and turned his gaze to the necromancers standing to one side. Grid’s face distorted as he saw them. It was a terrible expression that contained fearsome hatred and killing intent.

“What are you doing? Are you even abandoning putting up resistance now?” Grid aimed his sword at a certain man.

The famous ranker Drew, who was the head of the necromancers, cried out, “...Kill me!”

Grid was flustered. The strong necromancer had retreated and given up resistance. Now, he was even handing over his neck.

‘Do they have some trick in mind?’

Was it possible that the hundreds of bodies in the ground would explode the moment he approached them? Drew explained to the wary Grid, “The reason we invaded Reinhardt was purely due to Veradin’s command. But Veradin abandoned us. He left

Immortal.”

“...”

“I don’t intend to shirk responsibility. Moreover, I am one of those who invaded Reinhardt. I’m not asking you to end your revenge now. However, I hope that you will listen to a request today.”

“A request?”

“Chase Veradin and kill him. We can’t stop him with our strength.”

“...Where is he?”

“If you go behind the castle, there will be the entrance to an underground waterway. He is running away using that place.”

“Okay,” Grid answered before cutting Drew’s neck. The necromancers were all nervous when Drew died this time. Grid stared at them. “You were one of the ones who invaded Reinhardt? You will continue to die in the future.”

“...”

Grid had noticed that Immortal had been abandoned by Agnus. It was the only reason why they had lost their fighting spirit.

‘I didn’t see one peep of him but...’

Grid used Quick Movements and ran toward the underground waterway.

[You have died.]

Tarot had been hit by Grid’s surprise attack as soon as he used Blackening. He had been stabbed by the white light and received death from the passing Grid, reviving far from his resurrection point. There was a poisonous fog that caused nausea and dizziness as well as hot lava. Tarot woke up in the middle of hell.

“How rotten...”

Tarot didn't panic. Hell wasn't unfamiliar to him since he had experienced dying while using Blackening during a boss raid. Nevertheless, this didn't mean it was a comfortable place for him. Despite being classified as a half-demonkin, hell was an unknown place that caused him to feel fearful.

[You have failed to send a message to the guild. Hell is disconnected from the human world.]

[You have failed to send a message to the guild. Hell is disconnected from the human world.]

[The death penalty has failed to remove Blackening.]

“Tch.”

The duration of Tarot's Blackening was 15 minutes. It was a much better performance than that of Grid who used Blackening through Dark Bus' Earrings. So, what was this?

‘I was hit without noticing!’

Grid's appearance from when he cut Tarot without blinking was stuck in Tarot's brain. Tarot had no idea there was such a difference in skill between Grid and himself.

‘I was a frog in the well.’ Facing reality, Tarot burned with motivation rather than frustration. ‘The fact that I am still weak means I can become stronger. Grid, it will be different the next time we meet.’

Tarot was a weed-like man. No matter how he was trampled on, he would jump up again. This process had been repeated hundreds of times, allowing Tarot to reach who he was today.

“Let's try hunting demonic beasts within the time limit.”

He couldn't waste time like this! Tarot knew that he would return once the duration of Blackening ended. Therefore, he decided to invest the remaining time in hunting. The odd thing

was that there wasn't a single beast around, as if someone had just swept through this place... It was vaguely creepy.

Tarot was walking carefully with his weapon when he saw the back of a man in the distance. It was a man with shaggy hair and shabby attire. Tarot felt a strange sense of discomfort because he seemed to have seen this back view somewhere before.

It looked like the back view of Grid which he'd seen when he died.

‘How can that be?’

Was he crazy? Tarot desperately shook his head. The man in front of Tarot turned and asked him a question, “Question. Human?”

“...?!?” Tarot's heart sank as he confirmed the man's appearance. “G-Grid...?!?”

Had he followed Tarot to hell to kill him? The man's sword flew toward the astonished Tarot. Tarot couldn't respond to the speed nor could he endure the power.

“Cough!”

[You have died.]

[You have died two times within 24 hours and have been forcefully logged out.]

Stabbed several times, Tarot had died in the blink of an eye. He had died twice to Grid! Tarot swore that even if there was a blade at his throat or if he was given a bunch of money, he would never become hostile to Grid again! On this day...

[Title: Meeting with Grid]

Author: Hokquah

Contents: If you mess with Grid, he will follow you to hell and kill you. This isn't a metaphor, it is real;;;

A post on one of the famous Satisfy forums became a hot topic.

The comments below were full of sarcasm.

-Who doesn't know this? Think about what happened to Immortal. Hell is natural for Grid's personality. It wouldn't be strange if he chased someone up to heaven.

-Why would you want to taste hell by going against God Grid?

-Are you a Penan resident? Are you a lair of crazy people?

-I think Penan is really weird. Grid went there for sightseeing only to suddenly be attacked.

-Author's Comment: No, I mean he literally chased me to hell. And how is Penan crazy? That bastard invaded first.

-Yes, you really are a crazy guy.

-Author's Comment: (Reports have been received and the comment is hidden).

Chapter 845

‘Should I have killed all of them?’

Veradin, Drew, Tageo, Dail, Eisto, King Dragon, and so on—this was the list of Immortal members who had invaded Reinhardt and killed the blacksmiths and soldiers. Of course, the necromancers who offered their necks to Grid a little while ago were included.

Yet Grid hadn’t killed all of them. He felt reluctant to take away their lives when they had completely lost their fighting spirits and possessed a strong sense of regret over the past. They were different from Kir. Kir was a threat to Grid while Immortal was fragile after being abandoned by Agnus. Still, he hadn’t been able to let Drew pass since he was a representative...

“...Tsk, I should’ve killed all of them.”

Grid felt sorry toward Khan, who left first, and resented himself for being weakened by unnecessary sympathy. A strong killing intent filled Grid’s eyes as he rebuked himself. This killing intent was only directed toward one person.

‘Veradin!’

Grid’s steps became faster as he headed to the underground waterway.

“Wasting time struggling... Don’t you know that this is a loss for both of us? Don’t you have any of your own thoughts? This is why I don’t want to hang out with lowly people.” Veradin looked down at Bullet like he was a bug. He felt disgusted.

The eyes of the wounded Bullet shook as he asked, “The Veradin who struggled with the empire’s quest to massacre the immigrants, the Veradin who cared for his colleagues, the Veradin who was loyal to Agnus... Where has he gone?”

“He didn’t exist from the beginning.” It had all just been a fake act. Veradin had played the ideal human in order to gain the trust of others and attain easy access to observe them.

“...” Bullet sighed. He tried to hide his emotions but it wasn’t easy.

Veradin witnessed Bullet’s eyes twitching and scoffed, “Didn’t you once say that I felt like an old friend? I led you to feel that way. I needed your reputation to attract talent in the early days of Immortal.”

“...”

“Well, that was the past you. If you still think of me as a friend, don’t grab my ankle. Don’t use my name to live alone in the empress’ palace. By the way, since when did you start to doubt me?”

“...Since Agnus stopped acknowledging you and you started to give commands arbitrarily.”

“I see. I was careless.” Veradin glanced over at his poison master death knight and raised his dagger. He had wounds on his body from struggling with Bullet’s death knight, but there wasn’t a large impact on his movements. Bullet was forced to feel the gap between first and second place.

‘There is such a large gap in the rankings...’ It was crazy when thinking about how many times Grid had challenged the strongest people in the world. ‘If Agnus was still on our side...’

Bullet remembered the first day he met Agnus. Agnus had been so strong and cool. Back then, he led an undead army and seemed to shout ‘this is a true necromancer’, causing everyone to feel thrilled. When Bullet joined Immortal, he trusted Veradin, who spoke for Agnus.

Alas, reality was like a gutter. To Agnus, Immortal was nothing. Veradin, the spokesman for Agnus, had just been using them as

scapegoats.

“Kuk...!” Tears filled Bullet’s eyes as his expression distorted. Bullet had wanted to be friends with people who gathered for the same purpose. He wanted them to move forward together and enjoy this wonderful world. Was this wish such a big mistake?

His heart was screaming when he heard Veradin’s voice in his ears. “You should’ve been more vicious. Keep this darkness in your heart. Then I would be the one lying on the floor right now, not you.”

“...”

“Goodbye, boring person with a pure enthusiasm.”

The poisonous dagger stabbed Bullet’s chest. This was a blow that tore Bullet’s heart apart.

“Ah...” Bullet received great damage and was poisoned. Darkness sprouted in his heart. It was anger toward his past self for chasing a vain dream. Agnus who didn’t accept his admiration... Bullet didn’t hate him. After all, Agnus didn’t have an obligation to look after others.

“This isn’t fun.” Veradin read the expression in Bullet’s eyes and clicked his tongue. Bullet lay with his face against the cold floor and waited for his death.

[You will receive 4,300 poison damage.]

[Your potion cooldown time hasn’t returned.]

[The antidote isn’t working.]

[You will receive 4,300 poison...]

His field of view blinked red. Then his health gauge reached the bottom, and his motivation disappeared. Bullet had become an empty shell when he heard something.

“I saw it well.” It was an unfamiliar voice. The voice contained a strong will like Agnus’. However, it was gentler than Agnus.

“Gri...d...”

“If you have any interest in jiangshi, please contact me. Talented people are always welcome,” Grid said as he passed by the dying Bullet. Grid’s liking for Bullet didn’t mean he would spare Bullet. After all, Bullet was still part of Immortal. Still, Grid just gave him a chance. A gray pillar rose behind Grid as he entered the underground waterway.

“Pant... Pant...!” Veradin panted as he ran through the underground waterway. The arrogance and ease he’d had while mocking Bullet had completely disappeared. It was because Veradin had clearly seen Grid watching silently as Veradin dealt the finishing blow to Bullet.

‘Terrible jerk!’

To think that Grid just stood there and watched? Was he so confident that he could catch Veradin at any time?

“I will make him regret giving me all that time!”

In fact, Veradin had been watching Penan for a long time.

[The Cave King]

It was presumed that the strong man with this title was sleeping in the Penan underground waterway. Veradin had been extremely happy when he received Merchant King Kir’s call and thought this was destiny.

That’s right. Secrecy wasn’t the only reason why Veradin used the underground waterway as an escape route. He also wanted to obtain the body of the Cave King.

It had been shown that the poison master didn’t have any effect on Grid in battle, so Veradin would now discard the poison master. He aimed to secure the required dominance points by abandoning the poison master and then turning the body of the Cave King into

his death knight.

‘Is it here?’

Grid would soon chase him down. He had to hurry before Grid arrived. The nervous Veradin started searching through the underground waterway, not caring about how his body was being covered in dirt.

“It’s here!”

Veradin succeeded in finding an old and rusted iron coffin.

The Cave King—he was a villain from hundreds of years ago, who built a secret city under the Gauss Kingdom in an effort to conquer the Gauss Kingdom. Now, he would be resurrected in this world with infinite stamina and the force to stir the earth.

Veradin smiled with satisfaction as he opened the coffin and shouted, “Give up control of Death Knight Kyleo!”

The necromancer’s exclusive inventory, Corpse Storage, was opened. Then Veradin pulled out the white bones of the poison master and filled it with the bones of the Cave King.

“I, Veradin, will dominate the Cave King! Cave King! Become my trusty death knight!”

[This is a legendary rated body.]

[Due to the lack of dominance stats, you have failed to make the Cave King your death knight.]

[The title ‘Possessed by the Deceased’ has allowed you to overcome the limitations of the dominance stat.]

[You have succeeded in making the Cave King a death knight.]

[The title, ‘Under the King...’ has been acquired.]

[Death Knight]

[Name: Cave King]

Level: 361

* The master's level is too low. The level and stats of the Cave King are in a weakened state.

Strength: 4,100 (▼) Stamina: 4,100 (▼)

Agility: 540 (▼) Intelligence: 190 (▼)

-Skills Possessed—

Plunder (A-), Cave in Sword (A+), Lead to Hell (S)...

....

...]

“Hat...! Kuhahahaha!”

It was more than Veradin had expected. The Cave King was stronger than any death knight Veradin had obtained in the past, including the poison master. He had high stats, and all his skills were grade A and above... Wasn't this equivalent to one of Agnus' death knights?

Veradin burst out laughing once he succeeded in gaining the Cave King. The fear he felt toward Grid disappeared.

He didn't blink as he faced Grid who finally caught up with him. “Every time I see you, I am reminded of a theory. Don't you have any shame? You have inflicted countless damages to others and at this moment, you are giving birth to new victims. So why? Why are you so obsessed with the damage that you once suffered?”

“...?”

It was meaningless if the listener didn't understand the words.

Veradin said to Grid, “Your hatred and revenge toward Immortal. It is going overboard. Is Immortal invading Reinhardt that big a sin? Haven't you invaded many places? You even destroyed an existing kingdom. You are living well, yet you won't tolerate the aggression of other people? You won't forgive me? You are being dominated by the memories of the past. Your mentality of not wanting to return to your weak past is so strong that you

react sensitively to your territories being invaded. You really aren't fit to be at the top."

This was the reason why.

"Today I will punish you. I will drag you down from above. To a person whose consciousness is already damaged, I will be disgusting and evil to you forever." Veradin finished speaking and moved his fingers, causing the death knight to act. The Cave King's red eyes glowed, and a purple light surrounded his body as he roared.

Grid triggered Item Combination, and the Enlightenment Sword and Belial's Staff became one. Mana was used as the Cave King fired rocks at Grid. Simultaneously, Grid swung his sword as a shield was created around him. As Grid's shields continued to be generated, the Cave King's attacks didn't have an effect.

"W-What?"

What was this infinite shield? How many abilities did Grid have that went against common sense?

"With this, how many times have I killed you? I forgot so let's call this the first time," Grid whispered to Veradin, who was astonished at the sight of the Cave King collapsing.

"W-Wait a minute!"

"Keook!"

[You have suffered serious damage!]

[It is catastrophic damage...!]

....

...

[You have died.]

[You have failed to fulfill the conditions of ★Hidden Quest★
Hwan Kingdom's Resident (1). The Hwan Kingdom's Resident (1)

quest has been destroyed.]

[The Hwan Kingdom will no longer give you a chance. You aren't even permitted to visit.]

[You have died two times within 24 hours and have been forcefully logged out.]

Chapter 846

“Kuk! Kuaaaah! Gridddd!”

Veradin thought it was a dream until he opened his eyes in the capsule. It wasn't a dream but reality. He had died two times in a row and was forcefully logged out from Satisfy. Additionally, he permanently missed the chance to become a resident of the Hwan Kingdom.

Veradin raised himself from the capsule and couldn't help questioning it, 'How could he have that much power remaining?'

Penan had 3,000 troops. Thanks to the power of Merchant King Kir, there had been many rankers and soldiers armed with items, including the necromancers of Immortal. As such, Veradin had predicted that Grid would've consumed most of his skills and stamina in order to break through the elite troops and reach him.

No, the word 'predicted' was too modest. Veradin had been convinced. Grid should have been exhausted before chasing after Veradin. Even if he managed to chase Veradin, Grid shouldn't have had the stamina to swing his sword once.

Why?

It was due to the special nature of the resource called 'stamina.' Stamina was different from ordinary resources such as health and mana. It wasn't something that could be recovered with artificial methods such as taking a potion. A person had to unconditionally rest in order to recover stamina.

Logically, it was impossible for him not to be tired, even if Grid's stamina stat was over 3,000 points.

'Yet he was fine.'

How was this possible?

'Did the Immortal members on the front lines surrender to

Grid?’

Was that why Grid had stamina remaining? It was possible but...

‘It isn’t enough.’

Veradin wasn’t convinced by his guesses. He was frustrated because he couldn’t understand what had gone wrong with his calculations. In actuality, Merchant King Kir was to blame. When he spoke to Veradin, Kir had ‘reduced’ the amount of damage he’d suffered in order to maintain his pride. He hadn’t told Veradin that he had lost his unicorn to Grid! So, in the end, Veradin had been forced to make a false guess.

“...Surely, Grid doesn’t have over 4,000 points in stamina?”

If Grid’s stamina was this high, then his defense also made sense. Then new questions arose. What was the secret behind Grid’s extremely high attack power when most of his points were invested in stamina? How many intelligence points did he have that he could use magic? What was with his agility?

“...Is it due to him being overgeared after all?”

Veradin’s fist slammed down onto the capsule. However, he couldn’t exert a high strength with his lean body which didn’t have muscles. So, the expensive capsule was fine. Veradin was overwhelmed with a sense of helplessness, feeling that he was a small and shabby person. He had always been a victor in reality and in Satisfy, so his consecutive losses to Grid were shocking.

“Shit! Dammit!”

Veradin had wanted to become a yangban. He wanted to show there was a difference between himself and the two billion players. Someday, he wanted to put Agnus under his feet and feel an unrivaled sense of superiority.

“Grid!!”

His grudge toward Grid soared into the sky.

“...”

However, he wasn't filled with fighting spirit. How much had Immortal lost because of Grid? Veradin hesitated for a long time. He shouldn't have touched the nose of a sleeping lion...

If he had known that the identity of the lion was actually a monster...

Then Veradin lost his motivation and became filled with frustration and regret. He would've been a star that shone for a long time if he hadn't stepped on a monster.

The 3rd ranked merchant, Muto—he had cooperated with Grid to sell the chandelier to the imperial palace and was on the track of unprecedented success.

He hadn't missed out on the commerce rights secured with the support of the Overgeared Kingdom and made a pricing policy that satisfied the consumers rather than being greedy for profit. Now, hundreds and thousands of players came to the Overgeared Kingdom to visit the Muto Company, which was fully embedded in the kingdom.

Due to the rapid development of commerce in the Overgeared Kingdom which had been lacking compared to agriculture, Muto was competing for the second rank. Muto predicted that he would reach the second rank in the merchant rankings within the next four months.

The higher the ranking of the merchant, the higher the number of stores that could be held. Therefore, the value of the ranking was very high. The gap between the second and third ranks was great. Muto was overflowing with happiness.

In the past, he happened to meet Grid on the East Continent and ate the poisonous food of some crazy chef. Muto wanted to praise himself for having gained Grid's favor even if it meant going

against the empire. He was proud of his own acumen for having chosen the person named Grid.

As such, he was very satisfied with the current situation. Then one day...

“Why are you here?” Muto had a strong feeling of anxiety. The 1st ranked merchant Kir, who was praised as the Merchant King, was visiting the Overgeared Kingdom. Muto was chagrined to see Kir sitting with Lael.

‘Once again...!’

Many of Muto’s things had been taken from him by Kir. Kir expanded his business by using any means and methods, making him a natural enemy for Muto. Muto believed that Kir was doing some political maneuvering behind the scenes and realized that the position he had built up in the Overgeared Kingdom was about to be taken away.

‘He managed to make a situation like this while his city was being invaded by Grid... He turned a crisis into an opportunity in such unfavorable conditions?’

Kir laughed at Muto who was staring at him with eyes filled with hostility. “Don’t look at me like I’m a villain. From my point of view, you are the villain. Now, take this.”

“...?” Muto was confused. It was because Kir handed over the ‘account balance’ book.

‘What is this joke?’

Lael smiled at the extremely confused Muto. “Accept it. This is a book that provides a comprehensive view of the Merchant King’s accounts and business status.”

“That... What is this situation?”

Kir was the one who replied sarcastically to Muto’s careful question, “This evil bastard is pretending not to know anything

until the end. You don't know the plan that involves taking everything away from me and handing it over to you? Does this make sense?"

"What..."

They were taking everything away from Merchant King Kir and giving it to him? Muto's brain couldn't keep up with the discussion. Lael patted his shoulders. "It is time for you to take away everything that Kir has built up."

"..."

"Become the new Merchant King. This is an order from King Grid."

Duguen! Duguen! Duguen!

Muto's face turned red as he finally found out the situation. All sorts of emotions bubbled up in his heart and tears formed in his eyes. "Grid did this for me... He believes in me."

It wasn't a matter of believing. There was no option from Grid's position. The Overgeared Guild didn't have a merchant, so Grid could only use Muto. Additionally, Muto had shown to be wonderfully resourceful in this short time and proved why he was third in the merchant rankings.

Despite this, Lael remained silent. He thought it would be better to let Muto maintain his thoughts. Muto's response showed that a new Grid fanatic was born. Lael was pleased but he clearly distinguished between public and private matters. "Muto, in the future, you will gain an astronomical amount of money using Kir's rights and the commerce of the Overgeared Kingdom. Do you admit it?"

"Of course."

"Then give 70% of your profits to Grid."

70% was a reasonable request. The revenue shared between a

kingdom and a merchant company would typically be between 40~60% if it was an exclusive deal. After all, Grid had secured the Overgeared Kingdom's commerce rights as well as Kir's commerce rights for Muto. It would be difficult for him to refuse a profit distribution of 80%, let alone 70%.

However, Kir thought that Muto would refuse.

‘What is 70%?’

Kir knew that in the player base, there were only two merchant players who could manage his commerce rights—the 3rd ranked Muto and the 2nd ranked Cecilia. This meant it was inevitable for Grid to rely on Muto. Muto was aware of this fact, so would he be satisfied with only 30% of the profits? 40% to 60% was more realistic.

It was as Kir expected.

“70%...? I don't like that,” Muto declined it firmly.

‘Look at this.’

Kir tilted his nose upward into the air conceitedly as he was hoping for a rift between Grid and Muto. He didn't want to see them embracing each other. Lael sighed. He didn't show any signs of being upset at all. It was because Lael had already anticipated Muto's rejection.

“I understand. Then we will discuss this a bit more.” Lael thought that 60% was a realistic amount.

“I will give you 90%.”

“Yes?”

“What?”

Lael and Kir were confused by Muto's shocking remark. Muto smiled brightly. “I will repay Grid's grace for the rest of my life. In return, I want Grid to defend the Muto Company to the end.”

Muto was certain that Grid wouldn't end as the king of a small

country.

‘Considering Grid’s brute force, blacksmithing skills, and unstoppable momentum, as well as the many talents under him...’

In the future, Grid was likely to become the leader of a great nation that could compete with the Saharan Empire. Muto believed it would be worth the investment, even if it might only be returned in 10 years. That’s right. This was an investment. Muto dreamed of a larger future.

Kir read his thoughts and found it absurd. “Can’t you read the situation? Grid is an extreme person. He is dangerous. He is always creating new enemies and will one day collapse. Yet you are dreaming of a future with him? Muto, this foolishness is why you are currently third,” Kir made fun of Muto.

“Third? Aren’t I first right now?”

“...”

“Do you think I am stupid? Aren’t you the one who lost everything?”

Kir was forced to shut his mouth at Muto’s words.

After that...

[Merchant Rankings]

[1st place - Muto (Affiliation: Overgeared Guild)]

The newly updated rankings had a large impact on the world. Kir’s name was nowhere to be found in the rankings, and the one with the title of Merchant King was now Muto. The recognition of him belonging to the Overgeared Kingdom rose sharply, and it was natural to expand the forces of the Overgeared Kingdom.

“We can’t take it easy right now.”

Something massive was taking place in the second player-built

kingdom—Valhalla. The famous general, God of War Ares, was leading an army filled with tens of thousands of elite soldiers. His destination was the Ultina Kingdom. Ultina was a small kingdom which was chosen as Valhalla's first invasion target.

‘I must also do my best!’

The player, Oasis, who once overturned the world with the title of Undefeated King's Descendant, was right beside Ares.

Simultaneously, deep in the mountains of the Ultina Kingdom.

“Master's old friend?”

One player was facing an NPC called Asmophel. Haster, the player, was very wary of the sudden visitor. Asmophel was tired from his long journey and explained with a dark expression, “We belonged to the same knights division... Tell him that I am a traitor and he will know.”

“Ah, it is you. I have been waiting for a really long time.”

He was one of the Five Miracles. The hermit Haster, who even Kraugel feared, started to move.

Chapter 847

Underwatch, Rainbow Seven, and Unlimited Battleground—this was the list of FPS games which had been very popular among gamers all over the world for 7 years and 10 months. In particular, after Unlimited Battleground was released, it had gotten the title of No. 1 FPS game for three years. It led the golden age of e-sports, and the public was enthusiastic about the brilliant and precise control skills of the gamers.

Among them, the gamer who was the most respected and loved by the public was Haster. Haster was a legend. He was pointed out as the best player in Underwatch, Rainbow Seven, and Unlimited Battleground. His ultimate control skill was a default. He had the patience to wait minutes in one place for the enemy and the ability to read the other players using ‘sound.’

The American media had lavished him with praise. They had been enthusiastic that a legendary pro gamer equivalent to Lim X-hwan and FakX was born in the US. The foreign media couldn’t deny it. However, Haster’s throne, which had seemed everlasting, ended in vain.

It was due to the release of Satisfy. Once virtual reality games appeared, people were no longer enthusiastic about existing games. Their focus shifted. Everyone in the world became concentrated solely on Satisfy, and traditional e-sports experienced a downturn.

Then Haster announced his retirement. His retirement was tantamount to the downfall of the existing game industry. Many people were regretful while the E-sports Association asked Haster to stay and protect the existing game system. Despite that, Haster didn’t withdraw his retirement.

After all, he too had a new future in Satisfy.

“I really waited a long time.”

The Red Knights, the traitor, Asmophel...

A smile appeared on Haster's face as he connected the scattered words. How long had it been? It had been two years in real time.

Haster remembered the days when he first encountered Satisfy. He had a weak body that couldn't keep up with his brain. There was the item system which couldn't be overcome by raising his stats and training his body, as well as the inherent limitation of the character tied to the framework of a class. In comparison to FPS, there were too many external factors in Satisfy which made relying on his innate physical ability difficult.

Consequently, Haster judged that a hidden class was necessary to thoroughly train and utilize his natural skills. He didn't want a strong class. A low-rated class could be good too. Haster wanted a class that could perform all types of roles with various combat styles, one that would be able to carry out his cognitive thoughts.

“You've been waiting?” Asmophel was wary when the disciple of his old friend welcomed him. He felt something ominous. This was the disciple of a friend whom Asmophel had betrayed and made to live a hellish life as a result. Why was this disciple waiting for him?

“Is it to seek revenge for your teacher?” If it were Asmophel from the past, he would've accepted the revenge. In fact, he would ask to be killed. However, he couldn't do that now. Asmophel served a king and received his king's command. He couldn't die until his king's reign was over.

Haster asked the bitter-looking Asmophel, “Wasn't Master's nickname the Wise Red Sage?”

“...?”

“Do you think my master didn't notice the black curtain behind your betrayal?”

“...!”

Flinch. The astonished Asmophel stiffened like a stone statue, and he started to tremble. “Winfred knows the truth... I see...”

Tears of joy and regret filled Asmophel’s eyes.

“...!!!”

Haster suddenly pulled out a small Korean horn bow and fired an arrow at Asmophel. Asmophel responded by avoiding it while Haster pulled out a long sword and approached.

“What is this?”

Didn’t he say that Winfred knew the truth? Moreover, revenge wasn’t mentioned. So, why was this person attacking? Asmophel’s confused eyes shook like a fire before a gust of wind. Meanwhile, Haster’s eyes were as calm as a deep lake. “I’m not trying to get revenge. I just want to check.”

“Check what?”

“If it is time.”

“Time?”

“Time to revive the king’s name.”

...Haster. Was it time for the name of the king who once enthralled gamers all over the world to appear again on the stage called Satisfy? Haster needed confirmation. He didn’t want to lose his past honor by appearing on stage too early, nor could he determine his strength by challenging existing powerhouses such as Kraugel and Grid.

Still, Haster wanted to fight.

[Descendant of the Red Knights]

[Difficulty: Class quest.

Rating: SS

You have been given the skills and knowledge of the previous First Knight of the Red Knights, Red Sage Winfred, but it is

questionable if you are qualified to be Winfred's disciple.

Duel with the old Red Knights and prove your credentials.

Quest Clear Conditions: Duel with an old Red Knights member and win.

* The locations of the old Red Knights can be seen through hints left by Winfred before his death.

Quest Clear Reward: Unlock all the skills of the unique class 'Red Sage.']

"The king's name? I don't know what you mean!" Flames appeared at the end of Asmophel's sword as he blocked the sword aiming for his waist. Nevertheless, Haster didn't panic. He used Ice Dance, which he had learned from Winfred, to create a curtain of ice and block the heat. Steam rose from the ice curtain that melted instantly. The tip of a spear shot through the steam toward Asmophel's abdomen. Asmophel barely avoided the attack, and both he and Haster were astonished.

'Using magic, a spear, and a sword at the same time? This is the second coming of Winfred...!'

'He avoided a combo that even Kraugel couldn't respond to?'

As Haster recovered his spear, Asmophel's sword passed by his face. Haster gave up on the spear and his counterattack as he spun to minimize the damage. The attack wasn't visible to his eyes, but Haster heard it with his ears. Asmophel was showing off a dazzling swordsmanship.

Haster stepped back hastily.

"...!" Asmophel's eyes flickered. "That isn't Winfred's technique...?"

"This is a technique I built myself."

"..." Asmophel's expression darkened. Was it because he had no chance of winning against the bearded man before him? No.

Asmophel acknowledged the enemy's skills, but it didn't mean he had no chance. Asmophel was worried about something else. 'He didn't show up even in this turmoil...'

He didn't sense any signs of life from the small cabin behind Haster. At first, Asmophel had thought Winfred was just hiding, but he didn't think so anymore. Asmophel barely suppressed his emotions as he carefully questioned Haster, "Is Winfred away?"

"No."

"Then..."

"Master passed away last year. He lost his friends and family to the empire and was chased... The past few years exhausted his mind and body."

"Then..."

It was because of Asmophel. He had betrayed everyone! Asmophel felt deeply guilty and bowed his head. He was now filled with a new anxiety. Winfred had boasted a stronger mentality than Asmophel and Piaro, yet he hadn't been able to bear the terrible reality and left first. Were his other colleagues safe and sound? Maybe it was already too late...

"Sob!" Asmophel failed to hold back his tears. Haster faced him with gritted teeth and couldn't move easily.

'This is embarrassing.'

Was it because he had lived with his teacher for the past few years...? Haster was no longer able to sense the difference between NPCs and humans. Therefore, Asmophel's pained emotions were transferred to Haster.

'How painful is it?'

Haster had picked the wrong opponent. After all, Asmophel was the former captain of the Red Knights. Haster was happy to have a good opponent to test his skills, but considering his position,

Asmophel wasn't a good opponent.

'I should wait a bit.'

Haster apologized to his memory of Winfred and lowered the weapon he had aimed at Asmophel.

"....!!"

Then suddenly, the ground shook. In the distance, black smoke rose from the direction of the capital.

"War?"

No, how could this be? Moreover, why was it at this critical timing? Haster frowned as he heard a rustle in his ears. The sounds were coming from a small village in the foothills of the mountains.

"Sp... are...! Me...!"

"No...!"

"Resist...! You will...! Die...!"

"Kyaaaak!"

The conversation wasn't heard clearly, but the terrible screams were surely conveyed.

The faces of the villagers passed through Haster's mind one by one. The woodcutter who often brought wood in winter, the clothing store auntie who cared for him and packed thick leather clothes for him, the little kids who greeted him every time their eyes met, the shy daughter of the innkeeper...

The NPCs were all chunks of graphics. However...

"Shit!" Haster couldn't stay still because the warmth he'd felt from the people of the village was real. Eventually, Haster left Asmophel and descended to the bottom of the mountain.

"This...!"

A huge castle was depicted on the flag of the army plundering the village. It was the flag which symbolized the second player-built

kingdom, Valhalla. Suddenly, Haster could no longer descend the mountain.

There had been a period of two years before he met his master and another two years after he met his master. It was clear why Haster had lived quietly for four years. He wanted to show the world that the old king of the fallen game system had resurrected in a new game.

This was a simple matter of honor, but it was also a surprise for the many fans who loved and cared for him, and who were perhaps still waiting for him. Was he going to reveal his existence for the sake of a few NPCs? It would be denying the efforts of his past four years.

“Why is it Valhalla?”

Haster would be noticed by players, and they might even recognize him. While Haster hesitated, Asmophel approached him and handed over a worn helmet. It was a military helmet with a rod drawn on it. Asmophel was wearing another helmet with two rods drawn on it. Why was Asmophel handing him a military helmet?

“Ah!” Haster blinked as he belatedly realized that Asmophel’s name and face were obscured by the helmet. This was an act of consideration for Haster.

“I’m very grateful.” Haster bowed deeply before equipping the military helmet. Then he appeared in the world after a long time...

“Who are you?”

“I am a soldier.”

“...M-Me too.”

Only one of them was actually a soldier.

Oasis, who had been leading the Valhalla soldiers to pillage the village and secure food, frowned at the sight.

Chapter 848

The Three-Eyed Valley—it was the best hunting ground after the Boundary Forest (World Tree's Forest) which Kraugel had recommended to Grid. Kraugel had been fighting the three-eyed giants inside it for a few months and finally achieved his goal.

[Your level has risen.]

[Congratulations! You have reached level 300 and achieved the third stats awakening!]

[For every point of stamina, health will increase by 25 and defense will increase by 0.9.]

[For every point of strength, health will increase by 7 and attack will increase by 0.6.]

[For every point of intelligence...]

“Sigh.”

He felt strength boiling inside him. It was a sensation that was completely different from a while ago. This was an accomplishment that he achieved for the second time, so Kraugel closed his eyes with a calm expression.

“...”

The past was drawn out in his mind. In order to get one of the three passive attack skills, Quick Command, Kraugel had been on a quest involving the seven malignant saints and had visited the deep mountain where the Red Sage was located. Then he'd met an unexpected person in front of the small cabin. It had been Haster, the protagonist of old.

Kraugel hadn't listened to Haster's advice, that the Red Sage was sick and weary, and hadn't retreated. Instead, he had insisted on meeting with the Red Sage and confronted Haster with his sword. The result was devastating. Yes, Kraugel was defeated during the

days when he was still called the sky above the sky. Back then, Kraugel had become a Sword Saint and just passed level 200. He hadn't been able to defeat Haster.

Haster's battle style was unique and creative as he used all sorts of weapons and could summon an ice curtain. His unpredictability and speed had disrupted Kraugel's innate insight and super sensitivity several times. On the other hand, Kraugel's erratic nature hadn't worked with Haster, who relied on 'sound' to read the direction of attack and respond immediately. It allowed Kraugel to understand why Haster had been called the king of the gaming world in the past.

'Now?'

Kraugel wanted to confirm it. Now that he had reached level 300 and achieved his third stats awakening, could he fight against Haster?

"..." Kraugel closed his eyes and the cabin deep in the mountains appeared in his mind. Haster was blocking his way. Kraugel fought him and was once again defeated.

"...He is the peak of the old gaming age."

Haster was confronting the peak of the new age in order to win back his legacy, but could he steal the title from Grid who had already taken it? Kraugel closed his eyes again, and this time Grid appeared. The struggle lasted a long time until he opened his eyes again.

'I can't get used to defeat.'

Haster, Grid, and likely Agnus as well—they were the three people he couldn't overcome at present. Despite that, Kraugel's heart was filled with motivation instead of frustration.

"Tie up all those who resist! Don't threaten them and don't kill them! Remember that your opponents are civilians who can't

harm us.”

Oasis’ unit entered a small village at the foothills. It was a village but it was no different from a hamlet. Oasis frowned. All the villagers seemed hungry because of the cold season. In fact, there was almost no food in the village storehouse. There were only small amounts of dried meat and boiled animal skins.

‘I’m sorry.’

With the help of the Overgeared Kingdom, Valhalla had prevented an invasion from the empire and had raised its military strength for a year. In spite of this, it was inevitable that they would have to face the empire’s invasion again, making Valhalla greatly poor. It was impossible for the internal economy to maintain at this level.

‘We have to conquer other countries to live.’

The Ultina Kingdom bordering the Valhalla Kingdom was a potential threat. If Ultina joined with the empire for the invasion, Valhalla would have to fight in isolation. The purpose of Valhalla’s conquest war was to absorb Ultina’s economy while eliminating a rear threat.

Still, was it necessary to plunder them in the process? Even a small village like this? Should they incite the hatred of the people when they were planning to devour the whole kingdom? Oasis had doubts but it was answered by the power of Ares’ Plundering skill.

[The Oasis Squad has succeeded in looting the food of Ren Village!]

[The effect of ‘War King’s Generosity has been activated!]

[War King Ares has made a proposal to the inhabitants of the village that has been looted! The residents of the village will be able to find more food than what was stolen! The inhabitants of the looted village have developed a deep respect for King Ares!]

[The morale of the Oasis Squad has risen sharply! All stats will

increase by 5% while the morale is maintained. Stamina consumption will slow by 50%. The ‘Courage’ effect will be obtained. The squad won’t shrink back even when meeting a strong enemy.]

“Uwaaaaahhhhh!” Oasis and the soldiers cheered with excitement. The power of Ares’ growth type hidden class ‘War King’, which was currently at the unique rating, was the most special and unique amongst all the classes. Oasis had a deep faith in Ares. He had seen and learn many things under Ares and believed that Ares would help him become the Undefeated King’s Descendant.

‘I will also be a protagonist like Ares and Grid...’

One year—no, five years... No, it would be good even after ten years. Oasis was confident that his days of glory would come one day. He boasted a perseverance and determination that was beyond the ordinary.

“Who are you?” Oasis was directing the soldiers carrying food when two men suddenly appeared. The two men had their faces and names obscured by military helmets. At first, Oasis thought they were neighborhood youths, but their outfits were unusual. The sets of armor they wore underneath the cloaks were luxurious and excellent.

The mysterious men answered:

“I am a soldier.”

“....? M-Me too.”

“...”

How were they soldiers? One was wearing shabby leather armor while the other was dressed like a mountain hunter.

Oasis frowned and sent a signal to his soldiers, who surrounded the two men. “You are a wandering knight passing by who has paired up with a village youth who burns with a sense of justice.

Valhalla's troops aren't something that small fries like you can deal with. I will let you keep your swords if you leave right now."

Currently, Oasis was one of the faces of Valhalla. There was a need for him to act dignified so that the Valhalla army wouldn't be despised by others.

"Acting strong while robbing a small village? Your Valhalla is a complete group of thugs!" One of the men shouted at Oasis who was warning them. It was the man in leather armor.

"Thugs? Take that back."

"It seems to be true based on your reaction?"

"You...!"

Then Oasis gave a signal. To think the great Valhalla that Ares founded was being compared to thugs? The furious soldiers simultaneously attacked the two men. After their morale boost, the attacks of the soldiers were threatening. These soldiers who trained under Ares were as firm as rocks, and it was hard to find a gap in their defenses. Moreover, their spears were sharp.

"Hoh." Asmophel was impressed. He didn't know that 'real' soldiers could be trained to this level. Nevertheless, he didn't panic. After all, Asmophel nurtured the Overgeared soldiers who were armed with items, so he saw Valhalla's soldiers as below the Overgeared soldiers.

Asmophel avoided five spears which came at him from different orbits, and he caught one of them by hand. As Asmophel swung the spear he now held, the soldier on the other end flew and broke his allies' formation. Meanwhile, Haster blocked the attacks with a curtain of ice, firing magic like bullets through the cracking ice curtain. The soldiers had their armor pierced by the ice bullets and collapsed with loud screams, "Kuaaaack!"

Oasis felt astonished as the soldiers' formation broke in the blink of an eye.

‘Where did these talented people come from?’

Was it because the soldiers were relatively weak, highlighting the skills of the two men? The mysterious men masquerading as soldiers were reminiscent of Grid. Originally, Oasis would’ve run away once he sensed how strong these people were. However, Oasis was now part of Valhalla, so he couldn’t just leave the soldiers and retreat. Additionally, he had lost his fear because of the ‘Courage’ effect.

“You!” Oasis pulled out a sword and rushed toward Haster. Thanks to his ‘Charge’ skill, Oasis’ speed was very fast and his momentum was fierce. Still, it wasn’t enough to threaten Haster. He fired his horn bow and shot the front leg of the approaching horse.

“What?” Oasis’ vision spun. Then Haster’s sword aimed at Oasis as he fell.

The Undefeated King’s sheath scoffed, -You aren’t a threat to anyone now. You aren’t qualified to handle my great power. I think the relationship between you and I will end here today.

“That...” Oasis gritted his teeth and twisted his waist. Did he want to take evasive action while falling in the air? It was a control that the usual Oasis would’ve never been able to achieve with his concentration and physical ability.

“I don’t want to!” Oasis avoided Haster’s attack in a breathtaking manner. He rolled across the ground and jumped back up. “I don’t want to lose anymore!”

Oasis wanted to become the main character. He wanted to let everyone know that ordinary people like him could also come up to the big stage. The expression on Oasis’ face wasn’t ordinary as he raised his sword. Unfortunately, his opponent was too strong. No, his natural talent was bad. The level of skills he built up wasn’t enough. The world wasn’t that easy. Not everyone could become a protagonist.

[You have suffered serious damage!]

“Cough!”

“Oasis!”

A notification window popped up as he heard the screams of the soldiers. The pain came late.

“...?” Oasis’ eyes trembled as he couldn’t understand the present situation. What was this spear through his abdomen? When did this happen and who did it? Oasis slowly turned his head and saw a soldier in a military helmet. It was Haster. Haster had moved behind Oasis and stabbed him. He pulled out a sword and stabbed Oasis again without removing the spear, causing Oasis’ body to slowly turn to gray.

[You have died.]

[This is considered a defeat.]

[You have lost your qualification to become the Undefeated King’s descendant.]

[The voice of the Undefeated King can vaguely be heard.]

-I like your heart.

[The hidden class quest ‘Undefeated King’s Descendant’ has changed to the ‘100,000 Army Swordsmanship’ skill acquisition quest.]

-A loser also has his own oath. Shall we try a bit more?

The conditions for acquiring a legendary class were very tricky. It wasn’t something that could be obtained by deliberately targeting it. Still, the S.A Group wasn’t unreasonable enough to make the opportunity disappear after a single failure. There were new opportunities. No, in fact, Oasis received a more realistic opportunity as he died.

Meanwhile, Haster faced Asmophel. “I am thankful for your help. Aren’t you looking for the old generation of Red Knights? I

will help you.”

There were loud roars from the distant capital. Valhalla’s conquest war was in full swing.

Simultaneously, in the Overgeared Kingdom...

“I want to learn how to make jiangshi.”

“Why do you want to learn?”

“I want to be qualified to be next to the benefactor who gave me a new opportunity. I... I want a friend. I am tired of the relationship where you only use each other.”

“You did well to come,” Grid greeted a welcome guest.

Chapter 849

Asmophel and Haster didn't bother following the fleeing soldiers. The inhabitants of the village were safe now, and it was unlikely that the soldiers would return to retaliate.

"You're going to help me? Can you leave here? Weren't you protecting the cabin for a reason?" Asmophel asked Haster, who had taken off the military helmet and returned it.

There was obviously a reason. Some of the skills that he learned from Master Winfred involved raising the level through 'meditation.' Additionally, Winfred had left a will saying that a person of distinction would visit here. Therefore, Haster had protected the cabin while waiting.

Now, it was time to leave. Haster's skill level was high enough, and his teacher's will seemed to be referring to Asmophel.

"I will leave now." Haster would say goodbye to the place that contained memories of his teacher. Then a notification window appeared before Haster, causing him to smile.

[Affinity with Asmophel has increased by 10.]

Asmophel gladly welcomed Haster. "It is reassuring to be with Winfred's disciple. I believe that we will help each other on the journey."

"Me too." As he replied, a transparent orange shield was formed around Haster.

[All resources have been restored by the effect of the passive skill 'Heroic Story.' For one minute, your defense will increase in proportion to the amount of resources used within the past two minutes. In addition, a shield that negates all types of skills and magic damage will be maintained for 10 seconds.]

[Jiangshi Recipe]

[Category: Skill Book (Unique)]

-An old booklet containing the recipe for a steel jiangshi.

Conditions of Use: Daoist, Necromancer.]

Skills were mostly divided into two categories. They could be learned either through class-specific skills when their level went up or through acquiring them from hidden quests or skill books.

Of course, the value of the latter was higher. Unlike a class skill that could be acquired by raising the level, the skills acquired from quests and skill books were scarce. In particular, the higher the rating of the skill, the greater the versatility and power, as well as their astronomical value.

What about a unique-rated skill book? If it were placed on the auction site right now, the auction price would likely reach billions of won. The more assets the rankers accumulated, the greater the demand for items would be. Meanwhile, the supply remained unchanged. This meant the value of a Satisfy item was now several times higher than it was a few years ago.

“Are you giving this to me?” The 2nd ranked necromancer, Bullet, had been ignored by Agnus and then left the decaying Immortal after being used by Veradin. Now he was stunned. He hadn’t known that the jiangshi making method Grid talked about was a skill. Of course, he assumed it would be an item. He’d thought that a jiangshi-type monster would be summoned when certain items were used.

In fact, he hadn’t thought about it too deeply. Bullet had come to find Grid because of the expectations Grid had held in his gaze when he looked at Bullet, not because of his incomprehensible words about jiangshi production.

“Why me?” Bullet asked again while staring blankly. He was wary that this skill book would be poison. “It is pointless if you

want me to tell you information about Agnus in exchange for this. I don't know anything about him. Even if I did, I wouldn't say it. I don't want to mess with him. I'm sorry," Bullet bowed deeply and apologized.

It was an apology for disappointing Grid, who had expectations toward Bullet despite them being enemies.

'I am once again missing out on a bond.' Bullet's expression was bitter as he looked down at the ground. He believed that Grid would be angry. After all, from Grid's point of view, Bullet was protecting Agnus, who was an enemy.

However, Grid's response was unexpected. "Why are you making a fuss on your own? Who wants something like that?"

"...?"

"I want you to be my colleague. This skill book is simply a bribe."

Grid definitely knew that he was strong. He also trusted the Overgeared members, who were prominent in all areas. Still, this didn't mean that he felt no anxiety. His obsession with Kir wasn't due to being fearful of a future enemy. Rather, it was because Grid predicted that the Overgeared Kingdom, which was developing uniquely, would soon be isolated, so he wanted more strength. Since there was a limit of the strength of an individual, his desire to recruit talented people naturally increased, and Bullet was a good candidate to fulfill Grid's wishes.

Moreover, how long would Grid leave the unique-rated skill book that he'd received in the East Continent to rot away? He needed a good necromancer in the Overgeared Kingdom. However, most necromancer rankers belonged to Immortal, so he hadn't been able to find any talent. The 2nd ranked Bullet was a treasure that Grid had fortunately stumbled across.

"I already heard the story of Immortal and Veradin. Agnus never showed up while Immortal was being smashed."

“...”

Grid had accidentally seen Bullet screaming at Veradin and knew the ideal that Bullet pursued was a fit for the Overgeared Kingdom. It was why he was certain about this.

“Join the Overgeared Guild. We need you. I need you.”

“...”

Grid's eyes didn't shake as he stared at Bullet. It was different from those who tried to rely on Bullet's strength and also from those who tried to exploit it. Grid was confident enough to make Bullet feel he was trustworthy. To think that there was such a firm belief despite them once being enemies... Bullet's heart thumped. He felt a type of respect for Grid that was different from what he felt for Agnus. “Thank you. In the future, the Overgeared Guild... No, Grid, I will repay your faith.”

Nevertheless, there was something Bullet had to make clear before that. “I will purchase the skill book at a reasonable price. It is too big a burden if I just receive this from you.”

He had seen more than one or two relationships destroyed because of money and didn't want to leave room for this at the very beginning. This decision was made based on Bullet's previous experience. However, Grid refused to accept it. “What if I don't want to? This is a skill book that I obtained from the East Continent.”

It was an item he had obtained after defeating the chief of the Lava Prison, the largest prison of the Cho Kingdom. The skill book was a rare item which couldn't be obtained twice.

“Do you think you can put a value on this skill book?”

“...”

Then what was Bullet supposed to do? Confused, he just stayed silent. Meanwhile, Grid showed a wicked smile. “I'll mortgage your life with this. You can never leave my side in the future.”

“What if I eat the skill book and run away?”

“Haven’t you already seen the result of the kill order? I will follow you to the ends of hell.”

“Haha...”

Should he pull out now? Bullet thought about it seriously, but he couldn’t overcome the temptation. His wish of a ‘precious bond’ caused him to feel a deep attraction to Grid’s offer.

[Necromancer ‘Bullet’ has joined Overgeared Guild One!]

[The ‘Jiangshi Recipe’ has been acquired.]

[The skill Jiangshi Production has been opened.]

[The skill Coffin Production has been opened.]

[The skill Jiangshi Control has been opened.]

[Jiangshi Production Lv. 1]

[You can turn a human body into a jiangshi. It can’t be produced from the body of another species, monster or animal.]

If the level of the body is higher than the creator’s level, the jiangshi can’t be made.

The starting level of the steel jiangshi is 100 and the maximum level is 100 levels lower than the creator.

* The higher the skill level, the higher the variety of the jiangshi that can be created.

Skill Mana Consumption: 100% maximum mana.

Skill Cooldown Time: None.]

[Coffin Production]

[It is possible to produce coffins for the purpose of storing the jiangshi.]

A coffin is required to control the jiangshi.

One coffin is consumed per jiangshi.

Resources Consumed: 1,000 mana.

Skill Ingredients Consumption: 12 spikes, 3 birch trees.

Coffin Production Time: 1 hour and 30 minutes.]

[Jiangshi Control Lv. 1]

[Passive.

You can have a maximum of two jiangshis.

Once taken out of the coffin, the jiangshi can be active for up to three hours. After three hours, it should rest for three hours in the coffin. After death, the jiangshi needs to rest for 12 hours in the coffin.]

‘Isn’t this unbelievable?’ Once Bullet saw the information of the newly learned skills and understood the concept of a jiangshi, he couldn’t help feeling surprised. ‘Won’t it grow to be recognized as a unique presence like the death knights?’

There was a disadvantage in the fact that the level of the jiangshi was limited, but this was likely to be overcome once the level of Jiangshi Production increased. In other words, the jiangshi was classified as a top-grade undead.

“This is a great undead...”

“I told you. It was obtained from the East Continent.”

Grid remembered the strength of the black horse jiangshi that had been the head of the Lava Prison. It was a monster that ordinary players couldn’t afford to go against. If Bullet had several black horse jiangshis...

“Bullet, please work hard in the future. I will give as much support as you need.”

“I will surely live up to your expectations...!” Bullet was overwhelmed by Grid’s cheers. He was convinced that if he

summoned the regular undead, which consumed the dominance stat, and the jiangshi which didn't consume the dominance stat, he would have an undead army that wasn't lacking compared to Agnus'. Bullet felt a sensation that went beyond his limits.

Once this happened, a bit of greed rose inside him. "I'll have to get a new necklace."

His current necklace was made with crow bones. This bone necklace had a large amethyst embedded in the center and was an accessory which raised a necromancer's dominance stat. The higher the rating, the higher the effect would be.

"Necklace? Do you know a good jewelry maker?" Grid asked Bullet, who planned to invest a lot of money in the necklace. The jewels acquired from the Belial raid were stuck in Grid's inventory. Grid hadn't been able to use the treasures which showed various effects because he couldn't find a suitable person to work on it.

Bullet nodded without hesitation. "I have a relationship with Princess."

"Princess?"

Why was a princess suddenly being mentioned? Bullet explained to Grid, "Oh, she is famous among the necromancers. There is a skilled jewelry maker who lives deep in the dungeon of Gerad Mountain and only makes necklaces. Her style and attitude are like those of a princess, so we call her 'Princess'."

"Introduce me to her."

"It will be difficult."

On the day that Grid and Bullet joined forces, Satisfy's communities heated up.

-Necromancer Rankings—

1st place – Veradin (No affiliation).

2nd place - Bullet (Overgeared Guild).

-After Muto, it is Bullet?

-The 2nd ranked necromancer joined the Overgeared Guild... This is big.

-Wasn't Bullet part of Immortal?

-He kept dying because of the kill order, so he surrendered and joined the Overgeared Guild...

-He has no guts. From the perspective of Immortal, he is a complete traitor.

-Are you condemning him for trying to find a way to live? Is this something to criticize?

-The Overgeared army + an undead army...

-Even if the old Seven Guilds are reunited, they won't be able to go against the Overgeared Guild.

-Isn't that obvious? Weren't the Seven Guilds slaughtered by the Overgeared Kingdom's farmers before?

-Ah... ——;; There was something like that.

-Where are people like Zibal and Seuron these days?

-They can only suck on the Overgeared member's fingers everyday.

-What about Agnus?

-Agnus is too elusive...

The current powerhouses, the old powerhouses, and the new powerhouses were destined to be discussed. Additionally, it was natural for the public to be interested in Agnus after he became a legend.

“Kilkik!” One man arrived before the giant mountain—Gerad Mountain—which contained six artificial dungeons. Eat Spicy Jokbal panicked as he confirmed that the dungeons were being destroyed one by one.

“Grid?” No, it wasn’t. The invader was destroying the dungeons much faster than when the old Grid did it. “A dragon has appeared!”

Troubled, Eat Spicy Jokbal rushed off to Gerad Mountain.

Chapter 850

[An intruder has appeared in the ‘Gerad 1st Dungeon’.]

The time between the warning message and the result was unusually short.

[The Gerad 1st Dungeon’s first zone has been completely destroyed!]

[The Gerad 1st Dungeon’s second zone has been completely destroyed...]

[The Gerad 1st Dungeon’s third zone...]

[The Gerad 1st Dungeon has been completely destroyed!]

“What?”

There were a total of six dungeons installed in Gerad Mountain to defend the Princess. They were thoroughly designed to keep out invaders. Yet a single dungeon had been attacked in a few minutes and was now completely destroyed.

“Who...?”

It couldn’t be a player when even Grid hadn’t been able to break a dungeon so quickly. Particularly, the difficulty of the Gerad Dungeon was much higher than that of the Beware Dogs dungeon that Grid had hit in the past. How could a player beat the Gerad Dungeon in minutes? According to common sense, it was impossible.

“A dragon has appeared!”

The image of the dragon that appeared in the National Competition was still vivid in Eat Spicy Jokbal’s mind. Perhaps a dragon had landed on top of Gerad Mountain, destroying some of the dungeons.

[An intruder has appeared in the ‘Gerad 2nd Dungeon’.]

“It can’t be a dragon!”

The attacker was targeting the dungeons sequentially. Eat Spicy Jokbal hurriedly prepared various potions and rushed to Gerad Mountain.

[You have entered the Gerad Dungeon (4).]

[The traps have been activated.]

It happened when he entered the fourth dungeon. Sharp spears appeared from the ground and walls on both sides, while a huge iron ball that was a few hundred kilograms heavy fell from the ceiling. This was a trap which would’ve killed hundreds of troops.

“Bah.” Yet Agnus just scoffed while Lich Mumud used a spell. He floated himself and Agnus into the air and covered them with a shield of shimmering light. The blades which hit the shield were crushed and cracked, while the ball which fell from the ceiling failed to penetrate the shield and rolled onto the ground. Agnus stepped onto the iron ball and looked down the long corridor of the dungeon. “It’s a structure that only one person can pass through. Kik!”

The difficulty of the dungeon was rising rapidly. Unlike the first and second dungeons where he pushed through by summoning a large number of undead, the third dungeon became very narrow and the number of traps increased. Agnus had experienced all types of adventures, but he still found the Gerad Mountain dungeons considerably hard.

‘I can’t overuse Mumud.’

Agnus thought about it for a moment before waving his fingers. Then a skeleton emerged from the ground. It acted according to Agnus’ will and stepped on the small path in front of his eyes. The moment the skeleton entered the path, flames burned the skeleton. However, the skeleton kept stepping forward like it

wasn't in pain. It took four steps before more flames emerged and the skeleton's body of bones was burned to ashes.

'It is a fire trap that deals 5,000 fixed damage every fourth block.'

Agnus waved his fingers again, and a new skeleton popped up at the fourth block. This was Death Chain, a unique skill of Baal's Contractor which created a new undead at the spot where the old one was destroyed. The second skeleton disappeared as soon as it reached the eighth block, and a new skeleton was born, reaching the 12th and final block. The 12th block exploded without emitting any flames.

[Your skeleton has received 20,000 damage and has been destroyed.]

The entire path was destroyed in the aftermath of the explosion, and the fire traps which had been installed up to the 11th block exploded in a chain, shaking the entire dungeon. Agnus was far away, so he didn't receive a single bit of damage.

"Kilkik!" Agnus laughed and walked leisurely through the damaged path. New skeletons were created at the next trap and the one after that.

At the top of the Gerad Mountain, there was a young girl—no, woman alone in a small dungeon. Her two dark eyes under her bangs were very large, while her face was small and looked like a doll's.

-Eat Spicy Jokbal: There is an enemy! Log out right now!

"..." The woman ignored Eat Spicy Jokbal's whisper. This place was her workshop. All the items and equipment she needed to make accessories were here. She couldn't leave this place.

-Eat Spicy Jokbal: Hey! Bokja!

Blood suddenly rose to the temples of the woman who was

listening to Eat Spicy Jokbal's urging, and anger suddenly filled her eyes.

-Elizabeth: Stupid uncle! I told you not to call me by my real name!

-Eat Spicy Jokbal: It is because you didn't answer! Why are you chewing my ears off?!

There was a sense of urgency in Eat Spicy Jokbal's words.

-Eat Spicy Jokbal: The fifth dungeon is about to be breached! Log out right now!

He urged her again, but it was useless.

-Elizabeth: I don't want to!!

Bokja—no, Elizabeth had a certain sense of pride and responsibility as a jewelry maker. She was different from someone who made high-rated items easily because of their legendary class. Elizabeth was only able to make a few rare-rated ornaments with every few thousand normal-rated ornaments, and she had built up her current skills by making thousands of rare-rated and epic-rated ornaments.

She wanted to show confidence to the people who believed in her and requested for commissions, and this workshop was necessary for that.

-Elizabeth: I don't know who it is, but didn't the guest come because they need my skills? They might be an illegal trespasser, but it is only right for me to respond. Yet you want me to flee from my workshop?

-Eat Spicy Jokbal: It is fine if the opponent is a player! But...!

Who was it? What if it was a monster or a named NPC? It was hard to come to a conclusion, but he knew one thing for sure. Non-players wouldn't be able to accurately determine the value of his niece, and there was a high possibility that it was a malevolent

person who would not hesitate to harm her.

-Eat Spicy Jokbal: Bokja...!

Either way, Eat Spicy Jokbal didn't want his niece to suffer. He knew how hard his niece had struggled in order to raise her production class. Even that was just a secondary problem. Most importantly, as her uncle, he didn't want her to go through terrible experiences like death threats. Eat Spicy Jokbal shouted her name as he headed for the Gerad Mountains.

-Elizabeth: The illegal intruder seems to be a player.

He received an unexpected whisper from his niece.

-Eat Spicy Jokbal: What? A player? Are there hundreds of them?

He was convinced that his dungeon couldn't be taken in such a short amount of time unless 10,000 of the top rankers had joined together. Elizabeth gave a reply to the confused Eat Spicy Jokbal.

-Elizabeth: No, just one.

-Eat Spicy Jokbal: This isn't the time to joke around!

-Elizabeth: His ID is Agnus.

-Eat Spicy Jokbal: What?

Eat Spicy Jokbal got goosebumps. Now, it wasn't surprising that the attacker who broke through the dungeons at the speed of light was just one player, and Eat Spicy Jokbal definitely didn't want his niece to face such a madman.

-Eat Spicy Jokbal: Close your eyes and block your ears! Don't interact with that crazy guy!

Eat Spicy Jokbal shouted with a pale face, but it was useless. It might be due to a late round of puberty or because she had just started university, but his niece's rebelliousness caused Eat Spicy Jokbal to feel dumbfounded every time.

[The target has blocked your whispers.]

“Dammit! That Agnus, I will kill him if he touches my niece!”

Eat Spicy Jokbal’s face distorted like a demon’s as his anger burst out. It was a great rage comparable to what he’d felt the day he lost Blood Carnival and the dragon egg.

“You are invading illegally without going through the proper procedures. Can a famous person act in such a violent manner?” Elizabeth’s hands were sweaty. It would be a lie if she said she wasn’t nervous, but Elizabeth tried to act unconcerned. After all, this place was her workshop. She needed it to be an accessories maker.

“It takes too long to go through those procedures.” Agnus approached her slowly. Unlike the rumors, he didn’t show any signs of madness. He looked at Elizabeth with a purely fierce expression like that of a bird of prey.

“W-What?” Elizabeth could no longer endure her nervousness as Agnus got closer. She took a few steps back.

“This.” Agnus handed her a red stone. It was a stone that was more beautiful than a ruby.

However, Elizabeth recognized the stone with a single glance and couldn’t appreciate its beauty. “The Stone of Life...!”

The Stone of Life—its name sounded good, but the truth was the opposite. This stone had a terrible identity. It was a symbol of death which could only be created by killing a young virgin and sealing 666 souls in her deceased heart.

“You recognize it. You can work on it, right?” There were expectations and hopes in Agnus’ eyes. This was the opposite of Agnus’ image.

Elizabeth asked cautiously, “What do you want to do with this? Do you intend to use it with the Amethyst Shield and Red Mirror to summon a high-ranking great demon?”

“No. I didn’t struggle so much for something like that,” Agnus denied it immediately.

Elizabeth didn’t believe him though. “What else could you use it for?”

It was her mistake to pry as Agnus reached the limits of his patience. Snap! He was filled with anger and grabbed Elizabeth by the collar. “You just have to do what I say. You have no right to reject. I will chase you for the rest of your life until you accept my commission.”

“You have no manners!” In the midst of being angry at Agnus’ wild words, Elizabeth suddenly stopped when she noticed there wasn’t any great force in the hands grabbing her collar. “You...”

Was a human capable of making such a sad expression? Alas, the moment that Elizabeth wanted to question Agnus this...

“You bastard!!” There came a roar from the entrance of the dungeon. It was Eat Spicy Jokbal. “Get your hands off that child right now!”

[You have become stronger in a dungeon!]

Eat Spicy Jokbal pulled out his sword and rushed madly at Agnus.

At the same time, Grid was following Bullet. Then there came a moment when Grid couldn’t stand it anymore, and he opened his mouth, “Hey.”

He had been seeing the same place for several hours already, yet there didn’t seem to be a ward.

“Are you sure this is the way?”

“...I’m sorry.”

“...”

“Don’t worry. We will arrive soon. Probably.”

“...” Grid was inwardly surprised.

He admired the fact that Bullet had managed to maintain his 2nd ranking despite being incapable of finding hunting grounds easily due to his terrible sense of direction. If it wasn't for this, wouldn't Bullet be the first ranked necromancer by now? Grid thought about this seriously as he continued walking with Bullet.

Then after a while, they arrived at the same place again.

“...”

The good news was that Grid wasn't simply wasting time. He continued to make underwear while walking.

Chapter 851

Eat Spicy Jokbal bought a variety of information from top rankers in each class. It was a habit that had started since the time of Blood Carnival, and based on the enormous amount of information he had, Eat Spicy Jokbal's strength was greater than what people imagined.

“You dog bastard! Take your hands off her right now!”

Flash! Eat Spicy Jokbal's body was surrounded by a green glow as he rushed toward Agnus. The mithril longsword and armor reflected the lights which were installed throughout the dungeon. That's right. Eat Spicy Jokbal had equipped items meant for facing the undead. He was fully prepared for Agnus being the identity of the intruder. Having the power of Blood Carnival meant he could reserve many types of items. He wielded the legendary-rated 'Lua's Blessing' and the unique-rated mithril armor, instantly slaughtering dozens of skeletons that Agnus summoned.

The special characteristic of a Dungeon Maker was that they were stronger in a dungeon, and the synergy with his battle gear exploded against the undead.

“Kik? There are strong people everywhere,” Agnus spat out. However, the smile on his face didn't seem to disappear. He was still relaxed.

It was an attitude that enraged Eat Spicy Jokbal. “You...!”

Eat Spicy Jokbal felt a strong desire to kill Agnus, who still hadn't let go of his niece, and narrowed the distance between them. He hoped that shock would spread across Agnus' leisurely face. In spite of that, the process of narrowing the distance was too difficult.

Clack! Clack clack!

The undead that emerged from the ground kept pestering him.

The skeleton warriors...! For a number of rankers, these undead were tricky to face. Due to the high amount of dominance consumed and their outstanding abilities, third-advancement necromancers were limited to summoning two skeleton warriors at one time.

Yet Agnus summoned four skeletons at the same time, and Eat Spicy Jokbal was quickly isolated. The people who witnessed Eat Spicy Jokbal's actions in the National Competition wouldn't be able to understand how he was suffering a crisis right now. However, Agnus himself was in a crisis and released his grip on Elizabeth's collar.

"Sprinkle Cement!" Eat Spicy Jokbal left the four skeleton warriors in a state where they couldn't move with just one skill. Then he reached Agnus and linked it with 'Cutting Bricks.' If Agnus were still holding Elizabeth, he would've been cut by the sharp attack several times.

Instead, Agnus managed to protect his body and evaded the attack before letting out extremely pleased laughter, "Kuk! Kukukuk! Kuhahat! You are also one of them?"

"Them?" Eat Spicy Jokbal made a confused sound.

"A monster that can split the game into 0.1-second increments. Kikik!" Agnus kindly gave him the answer. He then suddenly pulled out the basic 'Supreme Ruler' ability of his sword, and Eat Spicy Jokbal felt a strong pressure.

'Just like the rumors!' Eat Spicy Jokbal's expression hardened as he blocked Agnus' sword. He could feel how fast and powerful Agnus was despite being a necromancer. Still, the information Eat Spicy Jokbal had obtained in advance allowed him to cope flexibly without any confusion. This information made a large difference.

The biggest part of why players were defeated by Agnus was his unpredictable nature. Even if Eat Spicy Jokbal predicted Agnus' actions, there would still be a problem. It was that Agnus evolved.

‘What?’ Eat Spicy Jokbal’s face turned pale as he exchanged a fourth blow with Agnus.

[Lua’s Blessing has received a demon’s curse.]

[The divine power of Lua’s Blessing has temporarily disappeared.]

[The durability of Lua’s Blessing has decreased by 27.]

[The attack power of Lua’s Blessing has dropped by 50% for 20 seconds.]

Was it a skill? Or was it a curse that dwelled in the sword itself? Eat Spicy Jokbal’s eyes shook every time he blocked Agnus’ sword as he confirmed that Lua’s Blessing had lost its strength. Agnus’ voice echoed in the dungeon, “You have a divine sword to punish the villain?”

This was Agnus declaring that he was prepared for divine weapons. Eat Spicy Jokbal’s temporarily weakened sword pierced Agnus’ abdomen, while Agnus’ heavy sword tore at Eat Spicy Jokbal’s shoulder. Although Eat Spicy Jokbal seemed to suffer a superficial injury, they actually suffered a similar amount of damage.

The power of the Supreme Ruler, which was imprinted on the rune, and the Sword Mastery skill weren’t enough to overcome the base difference in stats. After all, Dungeon Maker was about hard labor! Eat Spicy Jokbal’s strength and stamina were high like Grid’s stats. Therefore, his attack power was still strong despite his weapon being weakened. The set of divine armor also played a firm role.

The problem was that Agnus wasn’t alone.

“...!” Eat Spicy Jokbal got goosebumps and looked behind him, ignoring Agnus’ blow. A death knight was moving. In order to prepare for the attack of the death knight who was raising a sword with a purple aura, Eat Spicy Jokbal was beaten by Agnus’

continuous strikes and saw a painful notification window.

[Soseosan's Mithril Armor has received a demon's curse.]

[Soseosan's Mithril Leggings has received a demon's curse.]

[The divine power of Soseosan's Mithril Armor has temporarily disappeared.]

[The divine power of Soseosan's Mithril Leggings...]

[The durability of the Soseosan's Mithril Armor has decreased by 47.]

[The durability of Soseosan's Mithril Leggings...]

[The defense of the Soseosan's Mithril Armor has decreased by 20% for 20 seconds.]

[The defense of Soseosan's Mithril Leggings...]

“What?!”

To think that the curse could enter armor as well as weapons...? The death knight's sword fell toward Eat Spicy Jokbal's head.

“Kuk!”

The explosion caused by Eat Spicy Jokbal's sword colliding with the death knight's sword caused the dungeon to shake. Agnus and the death knight seized this winning chance and proceeded to bombard Eat Spicy Jokbal without stopping. The swords that kept pouring toward Eat Spicy Jokbal exhausted his health at a rapid pace. He tried to counterattack, but the debuffs, which had a low chance of activating, made him feel even more helpless.

“Uncle!”

This was the uncle who had raised Elizabeth on behalf of her grandparents and parents. She treated him as a friend but he was a person she looked up to from deep inside her heart. Elizabeth didn't want to see her uncle, who was always steadfast, in such a helpless state. It might be a game, but her uncle's pained

expression caused her heart to ache. The most serious problem was the terrible death penalty.

In the end, Elizabeth shouted, “I understand! I’ll accept your request, so leave Uncle alone!”

Agnus paused at this, and Eat Spicy Jokbal took advantage of the gap.

“Looking away from me during a fight is bad because I am a coward!”

“...?”

Something unexpected started to occur. The dungeon shook like it was hit by an earthquake, and its structure started to change. Some floors floated up while some of the ceiling rotated around and around, and the walls changed their position. This was the Dungeon Remodeling skill that Eat Spicy Jokbal received when he reached level 325.

[Dungeon Remodeling Lv. 1]

[Temporarily change the internal structure of a dungeon that you created. The structure change is random, and all objects in the dungeon won’t be able to resist the ‘confused’ or ‘isolated’ state. The caster himself can’t avoid this effect.

* Locations set as critical points will be preserved and won’t be affected by the remodeling.

* The changed dungeon can be restored to its normal structure at any time.

Skill Mana consumption: 20% of the current mana.

Skill Cooldown Time: 6 hours.]

It was a skill that put even the caster in a crisis. There were too many variables, but it was worth trying out in the midst of a crisis.

“U-Uncle! Diz...zy...”

“Kuk...!”

Agnus', Eat Spicy Jokbal's, and Elizabeth's sight became blurred. Although Agnus' resistance as a legendary class was an unexpected variable, the Gel-Dena Ring gave Eat Spicy Jokbal and Elizabeth a quick recovery. It was a ring made by Elizabeth herself.

“Bokja!”

“Uncle!”

Eat Spicy Jokbal and Elizabeth grabbed each other as they recovered from the abnormal state more quickly than Agnus did. They ran away from Agnus, who was isolated by the moving walls, and headed toward the dungeon's exit. Elizabeth no longer insisted on keeping her workshop. The loss of throwing away her workshop was serious, but it was nothing compared to losing her uncle's life. The two of them were confident they had escaped from Agnus, but it was an unproven confidence.

“Kik! Kikikik!” Agnus barely recovered from his confusion. Seeing Eat Spicy Jokbal and Elizabeth run away, Agnus shouted, “Demon Summoning!”

As the name, Baal's Contractor, suggested, he was the contractor of the 1st great demon.

“Dyulebul.”

In fact, the true power of Baal's Contractor was in summoning and controlling demons, rather than the summoning and control of the undead. However, this ability only emerged after his class was promoted to the legendary rating. The demon opened its mouth and shot out a ray, hitting Eat Spicy Jokbal and Elizabeth.

“Bokja!”

His niece was hurt, and Eat Spicy Jokbal's clothes were turned into rags as he wrapped himself around her small body.

‘Does Youngwoo know?’

Yura wondered as she barely escaped from hell.

It was likely that the Grid NPC in hell had a close relationship with Grid, but she judged that Grid probably wasn't even aware of the existence of the NPC. Otherwise, Grid would've told Yura in advance if he had known that his NPC was in hell. However, Yura hadn't heard anything about it.

‘First, I should inform Youngwoo-ssi about this.’

She had no intention of asking for answers, but there was no reason not to tell Grid about how there was an NPC in hell that was exactly the same as Grid when he used Blackening.

‘Then I will rest for a few days.’

Yura's fatigue was considerable after being stuck in hell for several months. One's body could be restored through rest, but one's spirit wouldn't recover as easily. The barren landscapes and the harsh atmosphere of hell made her spirit desolate.

The biggest problem was that the Demon Slayer class didn't shine despite her level reaching 320. Yura felt increasingly disappointed with her class which was unable to exert a satisfactory power, and her mental state kept falling. She felt shameful when she was compared to other legends.

‘In hell, I'm not lacking when I'm compared to the Sword Saint and Pagma's Descendant, but...’

Hell wasn't the only stage of the game. Yura couldn't be locked in hell for the rest of her life. This made her feel that she was lacking in comparison to the other legendary classes which could be powerful anytime and anywhere.

‘Will it be different once I complete all my class quests? But I know that Youngwoo-ssi hasn't finished his class quests yet... Perhaps I missed a hidden quest?’

Yura's steps were heavy and her face was dark as she headed toward Reinhardt. Her undiminished beauty attracted the gazes of passersby, but this was an obstacle for Yura. She didn't want to dazzle others with her outward appearance but to be recognized for her pure abilities. Then she received a chance.

[A demon has emerged in the human world! It is a high-level demon dependent on dark and powerful magic.]

[The new skill Demon Tracking has been opened.]

[The fourth class quest 'Old Enemy' has been created.]

[Defeat Baal's Contractor!]

"Gerad Mountain!"

Was this luck from the sky? The demon's location was very close to where Yura was. Feeling joyful, she ran as fast as possible. Agnus was a figure comparable to Grid, but as a Demon Slayer, Yura knew that she was the counter to Agnus. She had a good chance of winning.

Simultaneously...

"Is this place right?"

"You have asked three times already. Rest assured. We will soon arrive safe and sound."

"..."

"I apologize again for wasting your time. I'm really sorry."

"...I would curse if you weren't ashamed."

"..."

Grid and Bullet were still wandering on the road. Unexpectedly, Grid wasn't feeling particularly irritated. He could utilize the time by making underwear, and after talking to Bullet for a few hours, he felt that their relationship had become better.

Chapter 852

[Dyulebul]

[Health: 100,001]

Dyulebul was an ordinary hellfire lizard that lived in the hellfire river. One day, it was struck by the spit of 1st Great Demon Baal who was having a picnic and evolved into a higher demon.

* Dyulebul's salivary glands are affected by Baal. Dyulebul will spit out a ray of light every 5 seconds.

* Dyulebul's spit will deal 20,000 fixed damage to the target, as well as doing 8,000 splash damage in a radius of 10 meters around the attacked target.

* Dyulebul's skin is less evolved. It will get 2,000 fixed damage when hit. It is true regardless of whether it is a weak or hard hit.

* Dyulebul's tail will rotate without resting. The hellfire from the tail will inflict 3,000 fire damage to all enemies approaching Dyulebul. The enemy will receive 699 burn damage per second.]

Dyulebul's appearance was that of a human body with a lizard head. Its long tail, which had a flame at the end, was spinning like a hula hoop.

"A demon...?" Eat Spicy Jokbal felt like he had been struck with a hammer. He had never dreamt that a day would come when a player could summon a demon. However, when he thought about it, this wasn't that surprising. After all, Agnus was Baal's Contractor! It was weird that Agnus had only been able to summon the undead when he contracted with the 1st great demon.

Dyulebul flew over Eat Spicy Jokbal's and Elizabeth's heads and then once again opened his mouth. A glaring light filled with a mighty magic power was gathered there. How many people would think that the identity of this was saliva? Agnus warned them, "Shouldn't you stop resisting if you want to live? Kikik."

Dyulebul was less useful than a death knight or lich. Its skill structure was so simple that it could only be used to kill the enemy. Additionally, its intelligence was so low that it was only faithful to the instinct of 'killing humans' and didn't listen to commands properly.

However, it was strong enough to ignore all those shortcomings. It had a ranged attack which dealt 2,000 fixed damage and 8,000 splash damage, a flame that didn't allow the enemy to get close, and above all, a powerful tanking force! The demon received 2,000 fixed damage per hit and had a health of 100,001. Therefore, Dyulebul would only die after being hit 51 times. It was meaningless for the opponent to use legendary-rated skills.

This was a disaster for players. It would naturally be helpless under a group attack but when dealing with a large number of enemies, Agnus could summon the undead to attract aggro.

"Avoid it!"

Flash! The dungeon started to collapse in the aftermath of the first ray of light. Witnessing the second ray emerge from Dyulebul, Eat Spicy Jokbal pushed Elizabeth away, letting himself be struck directly by it.

[You have suffered 2,000 damage!]

[You have suffered 8,000 damage!]

"Keok! Cough! Cough!" Eat Spicy Jokbal's health fell to the bottom. He was unable to endure the shock and fell into despair. What was Agnus' biggest advantage? It was his liches, yet the current Agnus hadn't even summoned a lich. Eat Spicy Jokbal felt that it was absurd.

Agnus' rebirth as a legend was great enough to render the information that Eat Spicy Jokbal had collected as meaningless. He even wondered if all the information he had on Agnus was wrong.

'Maybe I'm not stronger than Grid?' A bitter smile appeared on

Eat Spicy Jokbal's face. It was funny because he had been using Grid as a criterion of strength without knowing it. 'I thought he was a bad guy...'

Strangely, Eat Spicy Jokbal felt that Grid wasn't a detestable guy. It seemed the experience they shared in the National Competition played a great role in this as he realized that he didn't actually hate Grid. Then Dyulebul opened its mouth again.

"Uncle!" Elizabeth screamed as she witnessed the flash of light. She felt regretful. If she had only just listened to her uncle, he wouldn't be suffering like he was now.

Did he read her expression?

"It isn't your fault!" Eat Spicy Jokbal shouted while facing the flash of light. There was no resentment or anger in his eyes when he looked at his niece. Instead, his gaze was only full of affection. "The result would've been the same even if you listened to me and left! He would wait here forever! Did you forget our family's saying? Don't regret the past!"

Dyulebul fired the third flash.

"Come oooooon!" Tears filled Elizabeth's eyes as she watched her uncle die. He was the uncle whom she had always thought of as Superman...! As her legs weakened and she fell down, Agnus' cold voice was heard in her ears, "Give up and work on the Stone of Life. You have no choice but to listen to me."

Why?

"If you don't listen to me, you will die hundreds or thousands more times in the future. Do you want a life of hell?"

There was no smile on Agnus' face. He was just serious and desperate. Agnus could finally resurrect 'her' based on the creation skill he got after becoming a legend, but in order to do so, the help of the Stone of Life was necessary. Resurrection—it was a word that would make anyone in the world laugh, but Agnus was

sincere.

“...”

The atmosphere sank heavily. Eat Spicy Jokbal had been struck by a third ray and was believed to have been crushed to death by a pile of stones. Yet now Eat Spicy Jokbal roared loudly, “You shouldn’t ask for a favor with that attitude!!”

He jumped out from the pile of stones and rushed to Elizabeth.

“U-Uncle?” The tearful Elizabeth was perplexed, rather than pleased that her uncle was alive. Eat Spicy Jokbal smiled at her. “Isn’t Uncle invincible?”

[You won’t die easily in your dungeon. You can resist all attacks for 2 seconds with a minimum of health.]

[The dungeon escape skill ‘Emergency Exit’ has been activated.]

It was the Dungeon Maker’s special move! On the first day that he met Grid, Eat Spicy Jokbal had been able to survive thanks to this skill. At present, the moment Eat Spicy Jokbal was going to use the Emergency Exit skill...

“Baal’s Eyes.” Agnus used a skill as he noticed Eat Spicy Jokbal’s actions. He had been on many adventures and met countless people. After having faced a number of past crises, he managed to read Eat Spicy Jokbal’s suspicious actions and blocked the variable.

Duguen!

Agnus sensed the air around him darken, and a giant eyeball appeared. The eyeball’s pupil which changed between black, red, and yellow clearly wasn’t human. All the beings it observed—Dyulebul, Eat Spicy Jokbal, and Elizabeth—were unable to resist.

[A complete fear will stop your heart.]

[Your thoughts have come to a stop. You won’t be able to move for one second. You can’t use any skills and magic for 3 seconds.]

This was an ultimate technique of Baal’s Contractor which

ignored all status resistance. It didn't distinguish between friend or foe, so Agnus received the disadvantage of having all of his currently summoned undead and demons disabled. However, he was fine since he could summon new undead.

“Stop interfering!”

After stopping Eat Spicy Jokbal from using Emergency Exist, Agnus rushed toward him.

‘Shit!’ Eat Spicy Jokbal gulped, and his expression distorted as he realized there was no way to avoid death.

Suddenly, a beautiful woman appeared.

“I will punish you.”

Her pure white cloak fluttered, and her silky hair waved in the air. The woman's name was Yura, and she condemned evil with eyes that were as deep as a lake. This was the appearance of the strongest ranker who had carried South Korea alone until Grid's appearance.

“Purification.”

Tatang! She fired a bullet at Agnus.

“Kuk...!” Agnus' head shot back with a groan. He completely lost his momentum, and a quarter of his health gauge flew away instantly. The problem was that after Baal's Contractor was upgraded to a legendary rating, his race had changed from human to half-demonkin. A Demon Slayer's attack was now fatal to Agnus.

“Why...” He slowly raised his body and summoned skeletons, using them as a shield for Yura's next bullet. “Why does the world interfere with me every time?”

“...”

“Huh? Kik! Kikikik!” Agnus laughed, burning with anger as he held his injured forehead. He was filled with killing intent while he

watched the woman in front of him. Then a quest occurred.

[The second class quest of Baal's Contractor has occurred.]

[Old Enemy]

[A Demon Slayer is the destroyer of hell. She regards you, the agent of Baal, as an enemy and will keep interfering with you.

For the sake of your future, kill the Demon Slayer!

Quest Clear Conditions: Kill the Demon Slayer.

Quest Reward: Species evolved from half-demonkin to demon. When you evolve into a demon, you can acquire new skills and magic as well as increase the number of demons you can contract with.

Quest Failure Condition: Killed by the Demon Slayer.

Quest Failure: The permanent loss of 100 points in your highest stat.]

The penalty that a growth type class received upon reaching the legendary level was to have their level regress to 300. It was a very small penalty compared to what Grid, Yura, and Kraugel would receive, which was to have their levels reset to level 1 after obtaining a legendary class.

This wasn't always a good thing. The difficulty of the class quests was very high, so the penalty which would be obtained after failing a quest was unbearably large. The class would be permanently weakened if even one mistake was made. It was like walking a breathtaking tightrope.

Agnus wanted to ignore reality, so he would normally welcome this situation. Nevertheless, this time was an exception.

“Get lost! Summon Lich! Mumud!”

Magic power exploded and hit Yura. Dyulebul overcame the status condition and also fired a ray of light at Yura.

Unlike other kids her age, Elizabeth had never once dyed her hair. In university, she had also stuck to her black hair. Wasn't it because black hair best suited her appearance which was like that of an Oriental doll? The surrounding people thought so, but the reality was different. For Elizabeth, black hair was Yura's symbol, which was why she stuck to it. She had adored Yura since the first time she saw Yura on TV four years ago.

“Pant... Pant... Pant...!”

“Yura!”

Yura was a world star whom Elizabeth had always been watching from afar, yet she had no time to rejoice that her idol was currently right in front of her. She was excited that Yura had appeared like a hero when she and her uncle were in a crisis. However, her heart ached as Yura became injured once the fight progressed.

“Kuk! Bok...! No, Elizabeth! Run away instead of standing there idly!” Eat Spicy Jokbal couldn't leave Yura alone since she had come to help them. Still, his desperate voice filled the dungeon as he struggled to support Yura, but he was isolated by the death knight and skeleton warrior.

However, Elizabeth stood still in her current position. She couldn't escape alone while her uncle and Yura were in a crisis. After all, they were her family member and her idol. Of course, she would've run away if her presence was hindering them, but this wasn't the case. Agnus never harmed Elizabeth. He just attacked Yura and Eat Spicy Jokbal persistently.

Yura was reloading her magic bullets after avoiding Lich Mumud's magic and Dyulebul's flash, only for Agnus to disappear from her field of view. Instead of Agnus, a skeleton appeared. Agnus had noticed that Yura was targeting him, so he summoned a skeleton to use as a shield. It was a tremendous improvisation.

While Yura was unable to fire her magic bullets, a magic circle appeared at her feet. It was the precursor to Lich Mumud's magic. Yura had already suffered a severe blow from the Fireball shot by Mumud. So from her perspective, she definitely had to avoid this magic. Yura's slender figure jumped away from this magic circle while a heavy pain was transmitted to her. Right after, Yura turned the muzzle of her gun behind her back and fired without any fuss.

Tatang!

The shot broke a skeleton warrior's skull. Then the ground cracked like broken pottery, and flames sprang up from the gap. This was the explosion magic that Mumud had developed earlier. Thanks to the skeleton warriors, Yura couldn't avoid the magic.

"Unni!"

"Kikikik! Kuahahahahat!"

In the collapsing dungeon, screams and laughter were mixed together.

"Is it here?" Grid asked after he barely made it out of the forest and discovered a mountain several kilometers ahead.

Bullet hadn't expected to see a mountain in the distance and quickly nodded. "That's right! That mountain is Gerad Mountain!"

"It was a long trip."

Colorful jewels jingled in Grid's pockets. They were the jewels he'd obtained from Belial's raid.

Chapter 853

Most of Lich Mumud's high-level spells had a mix of two or more attributes. The same was true for Explosion. Mumud first summoned strong winds and then ignited the flames. These flames boasted a higher accuracy and destructive power than normal Explosions. According to Agnus' experience, even a third advancement paladin, who would have higher magic resistance than the other classes, would lose half their health with one shot.

‘She's fine?’

However, Yura emerged from the explosion with no wounds on her body. Her health gauge was stable too.

“You aren't harmed? Kik!” Agnus' eyes shone with joy again. He briefly forgot his purpose for coming here.

Duguen! Duguen! His heart was racing. The only moment he could feel alive was in urgent situations when he found breathing difficult!

“Yuraaaaa!”

“Agnus!”

It was a lie to say they didn't know each other. Until the comet known as Grid appeared and disturbed the rankings, Yura and Agnus had been at the forefront and were quite conscious of each other. A Yatan Servant and Baal's Contractor—the two of them originally walked a similar path that might've linked their destinies.

Now it was all in the past. The weight of the evil that the Yatan Servants were responsible for was too big a burden for Yura. Consequently, she abandoned her foolish thought of fighting against Grid and became enemies with Agnus, the leader of evil.

Agnus had to be evil in order to achieve his purpose, which pitted him against Yura. This meant one of them had to defeat the other.

They had to devour each other. It was impossible for them to coexist. The two of them fought with serious determination as dozens of skeletons rose and fell in the dungeon.

Every time a blue light burst, a demon was destroyed. Then every time a new demon appeared, it was swallowed up by a blue light. A landslide occurred inside the mountain every time Lich Mumud used a spell, while Agnus was injured every time Yura's magic engineering weapon changed forms.

“Kik! Kikikik! Kuahahahahat! Interesting! I'm happy! It is exciting! You are strong!”

“Ugh..!”

The shock wave of the force was too big. Gerad Mountain was the 23rd tallest mountain on the continent, but it was too small to be the stage for the clash between two legends. The mountain started to completely sink.

“Bokja! You should leave!”

“B-But...!”

Eat Spicy Jokbal no longer paid attention to his niece's stubbornness. He just hugged her and ran down the mountain. Did Elizabeth want to stay here to help Yura and be crushed to death by stones?

‘Was Yura that strong?’

Eat Spicy Jokbal noticed the difference between the Yura back at the National Competition and the present Yura. To be able to fight Agnus for 10 minutes, wasn't this a strength comparable to Grid? He wondered about the secret behind Yura's rapid growth over just a few months.

‘Or was I mistaken?’

Was Agnus not at Grid's level in the first place? This couldn't be. It was impossible to predict who would have the advantage when

comparing Grid's strength to Agnus' strength.

‘Maybe it is simply a difference of attributes...’

The blue light Yura generated was fatal to Agnus' undead and demons. It was right to interpret that the Demon Slayer class had the advantage in attributes. Nevertheless, Agnus was well-matched against her.

‘There really are many monsters in this world.’

Agnus was on a totally different level. Eat Spicy Jokbal felt the same motivation toward Agnus as he did toward Grid. He was filled with the desire to be shoulder to shoulder with them. However, this motivation was soon broken. He felt it was impossible as a person fell from the sky. The surprised Eat Spicy Jokbal and Elizabeth stopped running. The person who fell before them was none other than Yura.

“S-Sister!”

“Ugh...!”

Yura's health gauge was depleted. She was barely alive by depending on the legendary class' immortal passive skill where they couldn't die for five seconds. Then a voice was heard from the sky, “Is this the end?”

“Agnus...!” A chill went down Eat Spicy Jokbal's spine as he confirmed the identity of the voice. In comparison to the dying Yura, Agnus' health was at the maximum. To think that the result of the 10-minute battle was so one-sided...? Eat Spicy Jokbal felt a terror that went beyond his admiration, and his determination to stand on the same level as Agnus was quickly broken. In the midst of the silence...

Snap!

Agnus landed on the ground and grabbed Yura's small face with one hand.

“Well, it was fun.”

The fight with Yura wasn't easy for Agnus. Three demons that he contracted with had returned to hell, and he had exhausted the remaining time of Lich Mumud's summoning. He had even used the skill, Bentao's Mockery, which exchanged health with the target. It was regretful that he had used Baal's Eyes on Eat Spicy Jokbal.

“It would be more comfortable if you had jumped at me. Isn't that right?” Agnus shifted his gaze while holding Yura's face. This forced Eat Spicy Jokbal to step back. It was instinctive behavior. He felt greatly fearful toward Agnus who beat him and then Yura sequentially.

‘Who can win against this monster?’

Grid? Kraugel? Ares? Was it possible? Grid alone could exert enough firepower to destroy a city, but this was also true for Agnus. Agnus also had Kraugel's power and senses to neutralize most of the enemy attacks. An example was how most of Yura's bullets were blocked by the skeletons. Then what about Ares' army? Agnus had the demons and the undead army.

‘It's a scam no matter how I look at it...’ Eat Spicy Jokbal gulped and completely shrank back. He was overwhelmed by Agnus and couldn't take any action. The moment Agnus' sword aimed for Yura's heart...

“Wait a minute!” Elizabeth shouted. “I'll listen to your request! So stop your hands!”

“...”

Agnus, Yura, and Eat Spicy Jokbal gazed at Elizabeth. Elizabeth demanded with confidence, “I'll work on the Stone of Life. Instead, please guarantee my uncle and Yura's life.”

“I'll do that,” Agnus didn't hesitate to accept her request. He was confident that he could defeat Yura and Eat Spicy Jokbal at any

time, even if they recovered. Just as Yura's ego was shattered, an angry voice rang out, "Why are you bargaining for the life of my colleague?"

Yura, Eat Spicy Jokbal, and Agnus were shocked. A man with black hair was standing in the location where everyone was looking at. The man who had sharp eyes and exceptionally broad shoulders was Grid.

'Why is he here at this time?' Agnus was puzzled, instead of pleased, as the situation got worse. It was the first time anyone had seen him so confused, including Bullet who was the third leader of Immortal!

"Agnus..." Bullet's mouth gaped open at meeting an unexpected person in such an unexpected place. Agnus looked relieved when he saw Bullet standing next to Grid, but no one saw this change. A Sword of Light struck Agnus' face. In shock, Agnus barely blocked it with a skeleton and let go of Yura.

"Are you okay?" Grid hastily caught the stumbling Yura.

"..." The rescued Yura wasn't pleased, bowing her head with a red face as Grid's fingers touched her. She bit her lips. "I...I'm..."

'Weak.'

This terrible reality hadn't changed, despite the fact that she had trained in hell for several months. Unable to be of any help to Grid, she couldn't stand side by side with him. Yura swallowed back her words.

"You are strong," Grid said, but he wasn't merely consoling her. "All you're lacking in are items."

The sniper rifle didn't have any effect on Agnus who constantly summoned the undead, so Grid guessed that Yura had likely fought Agnus with her weapon in pistol mode to guarantee an attack speed.

"You don't have any runes. On that other hand, that Agnus has

completely fraudulent specs.” Grid knew since he had fought with Agnus before. Agnus possessed skills which were hard to resist, and his items weren’t easy to combat. Grid still trembled when he thought about Bentao’s Mockery. How strong would Agnus be when combined with a transcendent talent?

Compared to Agnus, Yura had excellent talent, but her lack of skills and items inevitably placed her at a disadvantage. Still, this was just when looking on the surface!

This was Grid’s conclusion.

“Fight again.”

Yura wasn’t weak at all, and Grid wanted to give her confidence. Grid felt a strange heartache when he saw her looking so uncertain. He missed her imposing figure from the past. As a friend, colleague, and benefactor, Grid wanted to restore confidence in Yura.

[Player ‘Grid’ wants to hand you the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires.]

[Do you want to accept it?]

“Y-You?”

Following Alex’s Magical Engineering Bayonet created by Pagma, Grid was going to hand over a new myth-rated weapon? Frightened, Yura refused it. Yet Grid handed her the item again. “I’ll lend this to you. I don’t want to turn you into a debtor like Jishuka.”

“...”

Grid’s meaning was conveyed to Yura. After being troubled for a moment, Yura accepted the dark sword and stared at Agnus.

Agnus scoffed, “A dog who is already down is returning to the battle?”

His anger soared every time he saw Grid. Wasn’t Grid also

someone living with a terrible past? Didn't he want to pay back the pain from being trampled by others and a life of suffering?

“Why are you...” Rather than giving pain to others...! “Annoying! Kik! Kilkik! It is annoying!”

Was there only one accessories maker in this world? Why did Agnus need to go through all this trouble? At this moment, Agnus lost the string of reason that he was barely holding onto. He let out a roar, “Just die!”

Then there was an explosion of demonic energy. Grid protected the injured Eat Spicy Jokbal and Elizabeth with the God Hands and moved them to a safe distance away.

Flash!

Yura pierced through the demonic energy in front of her. She reached Agnus in an instant, firing her gun to break Agnus' skeleton shield while swinging the Enlightenment Sword at the same time.

“...!!”

Chapter 854

[The option effect 'Black Flames' has activated from the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires!]

[You have dealt 12,300 damage to the target!]

'Eh?'

"What?"

The attacker and the one who was attacked were surprised at the same time. Experiencing damage in the ten thousands was unfamiliar to both Yura, the attacker, and Agnus, the one who was attacked. When Yura attacked Agnus with the Magic Engineering Bayonet (Produced by Pagma), the damage he suffered had been 4,700. Now, she had just inflicted three times the damage with the Enlightenment Sword. Moreover, it was a basic attack!

This was surprising for Agnus, who possessed a passive skill to reduce his damage by 30%, and it caused a chill to go down his spine. Agnus backed away hurriedly, while Yura confirmed the Enlightenment Sword's information within this gap.

[+1 Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires]

[Rating: Myth

Durability: 1,660/1,660

Attack: 3,780+189

* 20% increase in physical attack power.

* 20% increase in magic attack power.

* 30% bonus fire attribute damage.

* 30% bonus dark attribute damage.

* 15% bonus lightning attribute damage.

* Deals an additional 50% damage to sacred beings.

* There is a certain probability of flames (large) being released when attacking.

* There is a low probability of illusions being released when attacking.

* There is a low probability of summoning a red lightning bolt when attacking.

* There is a certain probability of a black flames explosion when attacking.

.....

.....

.....]

‘This is the power of a myth-rated item!’

The bayonet that Yura obtained from Grid was still at the unique rating. From her perspective, a legendary weapon was strong and a myth-rated weapon was several times stronger.

‘The damage added by a +1 enhancement of the myth rated weapon is similar to three enhancement levels on a legendary weapon. ...Youngwoo-ssi managed to enhance this?’

Yura knew that myth-rated weapons didn’t have a safe enhancement area. The probability of enhancing a myth-rated item to +1 was extremely low. They could enhance it 100 to 1,000 times, and it would rely purely on luck. However, Grid had enhanced the Enlightenment Sword to +1.

Yura thought it was obvious that Grid had saved a country in a previous life.

‘He seems to be unlucky at times, but isn’t he lucky in the important moments?’

As the saying went, a hero had to be backed up by luck in order to be a heavenly existence. Of course, talent and effort needed to follow. In actuality, Yura didn’t know that Grid had enhanced the

Enlightenment Sword to +1 by using the ancient scrolls which definitively enhanced the item by 1–3 levels.

“Kik! Kilkik!” While he laughed, Agnus was convulsing. Ever since upgrading to the legendary rating, Agnus had rarely experienced damage in the ten thousands. Baal’s Contractor was a class that was hostile to the majority of players, so it was right for Agnus to have increased defense. Yet 12,300 health had flown away with a single basic attack...? It meant Grid had the power to distort Satisfy’s world view, and this was passed onto Yura.

“Kyahahahahat!” Agnus stopped shaking. He held his forehead while making a bizarre smile. Was he excited about the circumstances of this big crisis?

Grid, Yura, and Eat Spicy Jokbal frowned, while Bullet and Elizabeth trembled.

“Why are you so happy?” Grid asked foolishly.

“Kik...hiik...” Agnus barely managed to stop laughing and gave an answer, “I’m glad to know there are no limits in this world.”

“There are no limits?”

What was he suddenly saying? Agnus pointed a finger toward the confused Grid. “You are proving it.”

“Me?”

“Ahh, yes. You’ve grown better. Ah... Good... Good! Good! Gooood!”

Agnus saw an illusion of his dead lover. His only reason for living smiled brightly at him, and he could feel that his reunion with her was imminent. He knew that resurrecting his lover wouldn’t be a futile dream if he could distort Satisfy’s world view like Grid and completely break the limits of the system. Agnus, who had been laughing and screaming like a lunatic, suddenly looked at empty air with a light in his eyes.

“Is it time to take your medicine?” Feeling uncomfortable, Grid reacted sarcastically, but there was no response. For Agnus, ‘this moment’ was no longer important.

“Kahahahat!” Agnus rushed toward Yura. The Great Demon’s Horn that he wielded reduced the durability and attack power of the Enlightenment Sword.

‘It affects even a myth-rated weapon?’

Yura had already experienced the power of the curse emitted from Agnus’ sword during the previous battle, but now she felt greatly confused because she had thought a myth-rated weapon would be able to resist the curse. While Yura’s sword was tied up with Agnus’ sword, two skeleton warriors appeared behind her and attacked.

It was an attack that couldn’t be allowed to land on Yura, who had only just recovered a decent amount of health after consuming potions. There was a possibility that her health would fall to a dangerous level again. As she escaped from Agnus, Grid shouted to her, “Don’t flee! Just deal with it!”

Avoiding the enemy attacks would give the enemy time to defend and fight back. Staying to fight was the unique battle style of the overgeared, and right now, Yura was a true overgeared.

“Okay!” Yura replied. She abandoned her techniques, ignored the skeleton warriors, and continued attacking Agnus. Then what about Agnus’ counterattack? He didn’t bother.

[The option effect ‘Black Flames’ has activated from the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires...]

[The option effect ‘Red Lightning Strike’ has activated from the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires...]

Yura’s gaze caused Agnus’ health to drop. Her health gauge wasn’t safe either, but it was fine compared to the speed at which Agnus’ health gauge was falling. Yura’s passive skill to alleviate

damage from evil beings was also excellent.

“Ohhhhhh!”

“Kik! Kihahahahat!”

Black flames, red flames, and red lightning mixed together in the darkness. There was no turning back for the two people who were fighting desperately. They didn't care about their bodies and only wanted to injure each other. At first, Yura seemed to have the overwhelming advantage. This was because Agnus' health gauge was depleted one step ahead of Yura's health gauge, which still had one-third left.

Nonetheless, there was a problem.

[A legend doesn't die easily.]

Agnus still had the immortal passive skill, while Yura also consumed her passive.

“Kuk...!” Agnus' health was fixed at one point and didn't drop anymore. Then Yura lost her momentum and stepped back. Her opponent became immortal for five seconds. Yura wasn't immortal, so she needed to stall for these five seconds but Agnus was persistent.

As soon as he entered the immortal state, he used a black magic and cursed the ground in a 10-meter radius around Yura. It was an excellent move. Yura would've resisted if he had cursed her directly, but the ground couldn't resist the curse. The ground became like a rotted swamp and grabbed at Yura's ankle, causing her to become stuck.

“This...!”

“Unni!”

Eat Spicy Jokbal and Elizabeth paled. They thought Yura would soon die due to Agnus, who resisted all the attacks that Yura dealt to him. Agnus was also assured of victory while Yura felt defeated.

Meanwhile, Bullet closed his eyes. The two people were Agnus, his idol, and Yura, his new colleague. This placed Bullet in a position where he couldn't cheer on either side, so he didn't want to see the end of this terrible battle.

What about Grid? Grid suddenly pulled out Failure and moved. He blocked Agnus' sword just as it was about to pierce Yura.

"Who said it was a one-on-one fight?" Grid entered the battle and used Pagma's Swordsmanship, Wave. Stabbed by Grid's reversed sword, Agnus screamed. Then he tried hastily to retrieve his sword, but it was too late. Grid connected it to Link and persistently drove Agnus toward the swamp. Blood gushed from Agnus' body as he lost momentum before Grid's continuous slashes.

Eat Spicy Jokbal, Elizabeth, Bullet, and Yura were stunned. Grid was getting involved in a big fight...? Everyone was speechless at the sight of the cowardly (?) Grid.

It was funny.

"Kik! Kikik!" Agnus, the victim of this cowardice, wasn't afraid. After all, it was natural. How could there be a fair fight in this world? In the end, the winning side was defined as the one that was right, while the loser was the one in the wrong. Agnus was a former loser, so he knew this better than anyone.

"Kuk...!" Grid was swinging his sword when he fell into the swamp. Agnus succeeded in stopping Grid before the duration of his immortality was over. Grid, drowning in the swamp, hurriedly shouted to Yura, "What are you doing? Finish him quickly!"

"U-Understood!"

Agnus was currently distracted by Grid, so it was a golden opportunity for Yura. She dealt the final blow to Agnus, who was showing his back to her. Simultaneously...

[Baal's Contractor has been defeated!]

[You have cleared the fourth class quest, Old Enemy!]

[As a quest clear reward, your sealed stats are released.]

[The new skill, Sword of Light, has been acquired. Acquiring the Sword of Light skill has removed the Sword Mastery skill.]

Agnus was one of the best players who had dominated Eat Spicy Jokbal and Yura alone. Yet he died in a state where most of his skills were exhausted, and the swampy ground returned to its original state. Yura was wrapped in a blue light as she collapsed to the ground.

Then she heard Grid's gentle voice saying, "Good job."

"Thank you."

Grid and Yura smiled as they sat facing each other. Alas, they knew that the fight with Agnus would continue in the future. This was a natural fate because the path that Agnus had chosen was against humanity.

"..."

The first thing Agnus did after resurrecting was open his inventory. He was worried about having dropped the Stone of Life after he died. Thankfully, the Stone of Life was safe.

"How fortunate. It is lucky..."

Agnus' eyes reddened with relief as he hugged the Stone of Life. Then he heard Baal's whisper.

-Do you want more power?

"Shut up."

-You can't refuse me.

[The class quest 'Massacre (1)' has been created.]

[Massacre (1)]

[Difficulty: Class quest.

1st Great Demon Baal wants human souls. Slaughter humans and give their souls to Baal.

Quest Clear Conditions: Kill 1,000 players (0/1000)

Quest Clear Reward: 200,000 demonic power. Quest linked to Massacre (2).]

“I am... busy...”

Agnus' back seemed pitiful and lonely as he started moving with precarious steps. The madman that people knew was nowhere to be seen.

Chapter 855

[The bright morning has arrived. The list of Overgeared Kingdom quests has been updated.]

[Contribute to the City's Security]

[Difficulty: Overgeared Kingdom's Daily Quest]

Please visit the security department. Today's new mission is waiting for you.

Quest Reward: One Grid's Set Exchange Ticket.

*If you collect 40 Grid's Set Exchange Tickets, you can obtain one of Grid's mass-produced items. If you collect 120 Grid's Set Exchange Tickets, you can acquire one of the Grid's mass-produced items made by a craftsman.]

[Contribute to Securing City Resources]

[Difficulty: Overgeared Kingdom's Daily Quest]

Collect 100 leather and bones from at least level 100 monsters or collect 200 resources—such as minerals, stone, wood, herbs, and so on—and present them to the Procurement Department.

Quest Reward: One Grid's Set Exchange Ticket.]

[Contribute to Agriculture Development]

[Difficulty: Overgeared Kingdom's Daily Quest]

Please visit the farmlands. Today's new field work is waiting for you.

Quest reward: One rainbow potato. Affinity with the farmers of the Overgeared Kingdom will rise by 1.

* If affinity with the farmers of the Overgeared Kingdom reaches the maximum and is maintained, you are likely to receive a hidden quest from a 'special character.' However, the probability is very low.]

[Administrator Rabbit's Call]

[Difficulty: Overgeared Kingdom's Daily Quest]

The official looking for you today in the Overgeared Kingdom is Administrator Rabbit. Administrator Rabbit needs your help.

Quest Clear Reward: Gold.

* Administrator Rabbit is well known for paying a cheap salary. It will be a great help if you urgently need money. However, the salary amount will vary greatly depending on your performance.]

[Overgeared Member Nyangmong's Advertisement]

[Difficulty: Overgeared Kingdom's Daily Quest]

Overgeared member 'Nyangmong' has announced a daily mission.

Bring food to 10 sheep and 10 street dogs.

Quest Reward: One Grid's Set Exchange Ticket.]

[Earl Pon's Advertisement]

[Difficulty: Overgeared Kingdom's Special Quest]

The Overgeared Kingdom's noble, 'Pon' has announced a special mission.

Earl Pon wants a new skill book. If you have an epic or higher rated skill book related to the 'spear', please look for Earl Pon.

Quest Reward: ???]

[Duke Jishuka's Advertisement]

[Difficulty: Overgeared Kingdom's Special Quest]

The Overgeared Kingdom's noble, 'Jishuka' has announced a special mission.

Duke Jishuka wants a large number of jaffa arrows. If you have jaffa arrows, please look for Duke Jishuka.

Quest Reward: The jaffa arrows will be bought at 1.5 times the

market price. It will be three times the market price for special jaffa arrows.]

[Visit King Grid's Stone Statue]

[Difficulty: Repeated quest in the Overgeared Kingdom.

Once every three days, go to the Hall of Fame and worship at Grid's stone statue.

Quest Reward: One Grid mass-produced item for every 20th consecutive visit.]

“Hehe! I only have a few left now.” Ryan was a new user who started Satisfy after the 3rd National Competition, and he now had 32 set vouchers. Just like most fourth generation players, Ryan had chosen Reinhardt as the starting city. It was easy for Reinhardt, the capital of the Overgeared Kingdom, to lure new players because the infrastructure for players was well established.

In fact, the satisfaction of the players was very high. They were able to get Grid's set just by doing the daily quests every day, so they were able to get items faster than in other countries and were guaranteed a growth rate that was faster than average. Reinhardt's convenient system, which couldn't be created without thinking from a player's point of view, was a great attraction.

“If I finish today and tomorrow's quests, I can finally get a Grid weapon...!”

The performance of the various Grid mass-produced items could be seen in various communities, and they completely overwhelmed epic-rated items of the same level. It was difficult to compare them to unique items of the same level which some players carried around, but when the set effect was added, they weren't that inferior to unique items.

In the previous years, the growth rate of new players had been fast when they purchased high rated low-level items with gold. However, that was no longer the case. There wasn't a big

difference amongst the Overgeared Kingdom players who had gathered Grid's set. Still, Grid was the hero of the common people.

"What are you so excited about?" Alcolman's group approached Ryan while he was laughing. Alcolman was a person who had started playing the game at the same time as Ryan.

Ryan coughed and proudly raised his nose. "By tomorrow afternoon, I will have 40 Grid's Set Exchange Tickets."

"Wow!"

"Amazing!"

The eyes of Alcolman's group members shone. They hadn't been able to finish the quests and gather 40 exchange tickets, so Ryan looked amazing in their eyes. They wanted to congratulate him on obtaining a Grid weapon, but they also felt jealous.

"Ryan, will you be our bus driver tomorrow?"

"What bus driver? You will be our captain if you have a Grid weapon!"

"Hehe, let's challenge the Cigna Cave tomorrow."

The Cigna Cave—it was a dungeon where at least five level 60–70 players had to party together to clear it easily. Of course, it was possible to hunt in the dungeon with fewer people, but then the cost would be much larger than the profits gained.

For the level 50 Ryan and Alcolman's group, the Cigna wasn't an appropriate hunting ground. However, the group thought it would be possible if Ryan had a Grid weapon. This was because the strength of Grid's weapons was already well known.

"By the way, today is a bit disappointing."

"Yes. The epic rated skill books are only dream items unless high-level bosses are raided, and the jaffa arrows are like a blacksmith only quest."

"Isn't it possible to buy jaffa arrows from the auction? Jishuka is

going to buy them for 1.5 times the market price.”

“They are already sold out on the auction. I think Jishuka already bought them all yesterday.”

“There is a rumor that she is deep in debt. Where is she getting the money?”

“With Jishuka’s hunting speed, she can easily earn back the money she spent on the arrows...”

“I really want to see Jishuka hunt just once.”

“Me too...”

When were they going to step onto the threshold of the high-level Overgeared players? Still, as newbies, did they think they could get the opportunity to hunt with the best Overgeared members? Ryan and the Alcolman group were filled with expectations as they moved. They passed the hundreds of wagons belonging to the Muto Company and headed to the security building.

“I came to do today’s security activities. I am Ryan.”

“You are a level 51 swordsman. I will give you a list of suitable quests.”

Ttiring~

The friendly receptionist handed Ryan a list of eight quests. However, the difficulty of today’s quests was quite high. They were quests which required a minimum of level 60 to perform.

“It looks a bit tough... Are there any easier quests?”

Upon hearing Ryan’s question, the receptionist looked embarrassed. “It’s hard to get easier quests. It is the time when the two moons overlap, so the level of the monsters that pop up are higher.”

“Urgh! What should I do?” Ryan and Alcolman’s group were disappointed with today’s daily quests. It was a tremendous loss

for them to miss even one Grid's Set Exchange Ticket. They were in a quandary when the receptionist made a suggestion, "Would you like to do a cooperative quest?"

"A cooperative quest?"

"Yes. It is a time-limited quest under the auspices of the empire that is designed to commemorate the armistice agreement between the Overgeared Kingdom and the Saharan Empire. You can cooperate with people of the empire to do the quests, and the quest rewards are equivalent to the daily quest rewards of this kingdom."

"Cooperate with the empire..." The expressions of Ryan and the Alcolman group weren't very good.

Most players who started in the empire had the ideal of 'the empire is the center of the world.' In fact, the empire didn't refrain from spending money to help new players, and the early growth rate of the new players in the empire was much faster than new players in the Overgeared Kingdom (who hadn't yet acquired the Grid set). So, it felt uncomfortable in many ways to cooperate with people of the empire.

The receptionist reassured them, "It is safe because it is a quest made by Lauel who wishes for there to be exchanges and developments between the two countries. There is no need to worry."

"It isn't because it will be dangerous..."

"Huh?"

"Nothing."

The receptionist didn't know anything about the world of newbies, but Ryan and Alcolman sighed and exchanged glances. They quickly came to a decision.

"Okay. I will participate in the cooperative quest."

Ryan and Alcolman's group couldn't miss out on the exchange ticket. They had to clear the daily quests, so they accepted the receptionist's suggestion.

An hour later...

"Hello. Are you the ones who received the cooperative quest?"

"Ah, yes."

In Reinhardt Capital, the Ryan party encountered six imperial players.

Ryan's group greeted them politely while the imperial players remained silent. One of the empire's players saw the shabby weapons and armor of Ryan's group and said sarcastically, "It is just like the rumors. The Overgeared Kingdom is really stingy with supporting beginners and are just exploiting them."

"I agree. They are likely to die when hit by boars in those outfits. Kilkil."

Of course, the imperial players knew about the Grid mass-produced set. Still, the Grid mass-produced set wasn't something that could be obtained for free. It was a reward which could only be obtained by repeatedly clearing daily quests for several months and contributing to the kingdom's development.

On the other hand, the Saharan Empire supported all new players with gold. As a result, the imperial players were able to purchase the best equipment from the beginning and wore flashy armor. It was different from the Overgeared players who couldn't get the Grid set yet.

"It doesn't matter how good the Grid set is. It isn't a lifelong item anyway."

"I agree. It is better to receive funding, quickly reach level 100, and go to the higher-level hunting grounds."

It was around level 90 that the growth of new players in the

Overgeared Kingdom accelerated. Once they equipped a minimum of four Grid mass-produced items, they demonstrated explosive combat power and grew rapidly to level 180. In other words, the first few months were full of hardships.

Whereas, in contrast, new players in the empire could quickly reach level 100. After that, an individual's growth rate would gradually change depending on their financial ability and fortune. The great attraction was that they didn't need to struggle in the difficult early stages. The average level of the Ryan group and the imperial group was in the 50s, so this was a time when the imperial side had the advantage!

“Haap!”

The imperial players easily hunted the horned rabbits with their expensive weapons and armor, only needing to hit the horned rabbits three times, while Ryan's group struggled and had to hit them six times. This meant the imperial players were fine facing two or three horned rabbits at once, whereas the Ryan group would end up on the verge of death.

“I don't know who are the overgeared ones.” The imperial players started to mock the Ryan group openly.

The members of Ryan's group were angry, but they remained patient. There was a rumor that their King Grid had also been ignored in his beginning days, so Ryan's group had the vague belief that they just needed to be patient.

[The cooperative party has hunted 231 horned rabbits. (231/500)]

The progress of the quest was almost midway, which meant the duration of this humiliation was almost over. They just needed to endure it a bit more. The moment that Ryan's group thought this...

[The field boss, Four-Horned Rabbit, has appeared!]

“Heok...!”

A huge horned rabbit appeared before the cooperative party. The four-horned, red-eyed rabbit frightened the party members.

“Showing up here...!”

“Ah, really! The Overgeared Kingdom scum! If you hunted the horned rabbits more quickly, we would’ve finished and gone back by now!”

“That’s right! This is all because of you! The quest progressed slowly because of you and now we’re caught by the boss!”

The Four-Horned Rabbit was level 120! The party members thought that this was a boss that the cooperative party couldn’t raid.

“Oh, my. The newbies are in danger.” Another cooperative party emerged. Unlike Ryan’s cooperative party, this one was made up of over level 100 players. The players belonging to the Overgeared Kingdom were armed with Grid’s mass-produced set while the imperial players were armed with gorgeous unique items. It was highly likely that the imperial players bought their items with gold.

“He is ours!” The players belonging to the empire struck first. Three people armed with gorgeously decorated swords rushed to the four-horned rabbit. However...

“Kuack!”

Three-quarters of the four-horned rabbit’s health remained. The imperial players might have unique rated weapons, but it was hard for only three of them to catch the field boss.

“You should help us!” The imperial players had wanted to monopolize the field boss, but now they were blaming the Overgeared players. The three players belonging to the Overgeared Kingdom shrugged. They were armed with Grid’s mass-produced set and were the future of Ryan’s group.

[The Four-Horned Rabbit has died!]

“Wow...”

“C-Crazy...”

To think that the field boss that they couldn't raid died so quickly...? The imperial players discovered that Grid's set was more spectacular than rumored. Meanwhile, Ryan's group were filled with hope and expectations.

“Are you okay?”

“Yes... Yes!”

The eyes of the Ryan group shone as they looked at the senior players armed with Grid's set.

“Brothers! Are you members of the Overgeared Guild?”

The answer to this question was:

“Eh? That's impossible.”

“How can we be part of the Overgeared Guild? Well, joining the Overgeared Guild is certainly our ultimate goal.”

“It is a goal that has a 0.001% chance of happening. Haha!”

“...”

Time flowed and generations changed. For the new generation, the Overgeared Kingdom was hope, the Overgeared members were a dream, and the Overgeared King was a distant idol. However, Grid himself didn't feel this.

“Achoo!”

“Isn't it polite to at least turn your head away when sneezing?”

“Ah, I'm sorry. I received a sudden tickle. Did I get it on you?”

“I was infected with invisible bacteria. Rather, where did you find these precious jewels? Did you steal a treasure chest when you visited the empire a while ago?”

“No? I raided a great demon. Additionally, how can I steal from

the empire? The emperor and his subordinates are formidable.”

“You raided a great demon... The emperor...”

In the collapsed Gerad Mountain, Elizabeth faced Grid for the first time and received several blows. Grid casually spoke words that were on a scale which ordinary people couldn't reach. Elizabeth's resentful attitude toward Grid for being Yura's lover (?) gradually diminished. “In the first place, she wouldn't choose an ordinary man... I'm sorry. I didn't know the world and misunderstood you.”

“...???”

“You are special.”

The first ranked accessories maker—her workshop had been destroyed, and now she was on the verge of tapping on the door of the Overgeared Guild.

Chapter 856

Legendary items weren't an area of production—actually, this common sense fact had already been destroyed since last year. Players started to produce legendary items that were known to drop only from boss monsters. It was a natural phenomenon that occurred as players' production skill levels developed while their class quest difficulties increased.

“I think you already know but let me formally introduce myself. My name is Elizabeth. My class is an accessories maker and I am at the craftsman level. I can make all types of accessories, and I was fortunate enough to make a legendary rated ring and necklace,” Elizabeth spoke candidly.

Managing to make a legendary item was like a pie falling from the sky. She couldn't control the rating, so she added the word 'fortunate.' This wasn't humility. It was a warning that even if Grid commissioned her to make an accessory, she couldn't guarantee a legendary rating. If Grid were an ordinary player who didn't understand the production system properly, he would've been disappointed since he believed the exaggerated rumor of the 'Princess of Jewelry.'

“I am Overgeared King Grid.”

However, Grid had made more items than anyone else and had the best understanding of the production system. He knew that the rumors of the 'Princess of Jewelry' were exaggerated and wasn't disappointed at all. The anticipation in his gaze remained constant from the beginning.

“That...” Elizabeth's face reddened as Grid held out a hand for a handshake. An unknown feeling swept through her body when their hands met. She lost strength in her legs. It was the first time she had ever felt this way in her life. She pulled back her hand with a startled expression and hurriedly said, “T-Thank you... for

saving me. Well, you saved Yura more than me. Anyway, it is a fact that you helped me.”

Elizabeth had disliked Grid. She had felt jealous that he got good results easily thanks to his legendary blacksmith class and his innate luck. Additionally, she felt offended by his distasteful attitude. The fact that he was Yura’s lover was also a big factor of her dislike toward him.

Still, it was impossible to treat people rudely just because of personal feelings. It was true that Grid had helped her. So, Elizabeth appreciated it sincerely. It was awful to think that her uncle would’ve died by now if Grid hadn’t shown up. Grid cut straight to the chase, “If you really appreciate it, do me a favor. Would you mind omitting the commission process?”

In order to meet the Princess, there was a waiting list and they had to wait for their turn. Additionally, the Princess wouldn’t accept any commission in which the materials didn’t attract her attention. These were the conditions required for Elizabeth to accept a production request. It was simple but fastidious. To think they had to wait just to ask for a production request? Moreover, what materials attracted her interest?

“I understand. I will accept your request and make it the top priority. Only...” Elizabeth needed to let Grid know. “I won’t be as efficient if I don’t find pleasure in the work process. The result of tedious work isn’t always as good. I hope that your request will interest me.”

‘I just want to commission a ring...’

That’s right. Grid just wanted rings. He currently had a total of four rings—his wedding ring, Doran’s Ring, the Ring of Absurdity, and Elfin Stone’s Ring. Among them, his wedding ring and Doran’s Ring were worn according to circumstances. The only rings he always wore were the Ring of Absurdity and Elfin Stone’s Ring. Eight fingers were almost always empty.

One bracelet could be worn on both wrists, and he wore the Guardian's Bracelet and Neberius' Bracelet. His necklace was the Guardian's Necklace while his earrings were Dark Bus' Earrings and the Black Quartz Earrings. Therefore, making eight rings was sufficient.

Yet she was asking for an interesting request?

‘What type of unusual accessory should I ask for? A piercing? A chain? Will such accessories add stats?’

Grid's deep thoughts were unnecessary though. While he was feeling troubled, he brought out a jewels package.

“Huh...? U-Uh?” Elizabeth's eyes widened when she verified the contents of the package. She was speechless as she witnessed jewels she had never seen before.

[Belial's Black Jewel (S)]

[-A beautiful jewel that can be processed into a material for accessories. The value of this gem that can never be obtained is at the same level as buying a city.

When making accessories, you can acquire options that increase intelligence or shadow resistance. Additionally, there is a possibility that a passive skill will be attached depending on the skills of the accessory maker.

However, it will be difficult to find someone who can handle this jewel, like picking a star from the sky.]

[Belial's Red Jewel (S)]

[.....

.....

When making accessories, there is a chance of acquiring items that increase intelligence or flame resistance. Additionally, there is a possibility that a passive skill will be attached depending on the skills of the accessory maker.

However, it will be difficult to find someone who can handle this jewel, like picking a star from the sky.]

‘There are jewels that can add stats and resistance? It can even have a passive skill attached?’

Elizabeth had received countless production commissions, and among those who commissioned accessories from her, many were high rankers. Some of them had given her jewels which had dropped from bosses. Unlike regular jewels, the ones dropped from named bosses had a ‘low probability’ of increasing stats or resistance.

The jewels from Grid, however, gave stats and resistances, as well as passive skills. Elizabeth had never seen such jewels among the hundreds that she had worked on. As stated in the explanation, the value of these jewels was astronomical.

“H-Huge...” The admiration in Elizabeth’s expression rose after hearing that Grid got the jewels from raiding Belial.

Grid was sighing. “I don’t know if my request will interest you. I just want ordinary rings...”

“Rings?”

“Yes. Eight rings.”

“What about a necklace? Bracelets? Do you need earrings?”

“...?” Grid was confused. He thought Elizabeth would be disappointed to hear his request, but she was so excited that she got close to his face. Her large black eyes shone like lanterns. It was as if she had a meal before her. “You are too close...”

“...” Yura and Eat Spicy Jokbal looked uncomfortable for some reason.

Grid stepped away from Elizabeth and explained, “As you can see, I’m currently using necklaces, bracelets, and earrings.”

Their effects were also excellent. The Guardian’s Bracelet and

Necklace, which had defense and indomitable stat options, were unique accessories that gave an additional 100 defense when worn as a set. Meanwhile, Neberius' Necklace increased strength by 30 and reduced magic casting time by 20%, the Black Quartz Earrings increased intelligence by 15%, and Dark Bus' Earrings made it possible to use the Blackening skill.

Grid played the roles of damage dealer, tanker, and magician, so he couldn't abandon any of them.

However, Elizabeth glanced at the options of Grid's accessories using her 'Artisan's Eyes' and thought differently. "You can stop wearing the jade bracelet and necklace. They look like they have an effect as a set, but aren't they just unique rated accessories?"

"Yes..."

Few items were as hard to find as accessories, especially accessory sets. A unique rated accessory set had a similar value to legendary rated ornaments. Grid responded like he couldn't understand, causing Elizabeth to hit her chest with frustration. Still, Grid didn't show any reaction to her agitation. Elizabeth shouted at the blank-looking Grid, "I can make much better bracelets and necklaces, even when considering the set effect! I don't need luck! It is enough just using the jewel materials that you brought!"

However, there was a problem.

"But these large jewels might be hard for me to work with..." Elizabeth had no confidence in working with S-grade jewels. A level higher than craftsman was required to work on them. In other words...

"You can make accessories better than my current ones using the B-grade jewels but not the S-grade jewels?"

The value of Belial's jewels were several times greater than what Grid had expected.

"Yes." Elizabeth took out the B-grade jewels and confirmed it.

“The rating will be epic, but the effects will be better than the necklace and bracelet set you are wearing now.”

The number of jewels was enough. Grid had handed over 30 jewels to Elizabeth. There were 10 C-grade jewels, 10 B-grade jewels, and 10 S-grade jewels. Putting aside the 10 S-grade jewels, there was enough to make a necklace, bracelet, and eight rings.

‘This is a great opportunity.’

Elizabeth was more excited than Grid. She felt joyous at being lucky enough to craft accessories using jewels which could only be obtained by raiding a great demon. As such, she revealed her inner feelings without knowing it. “It’s too bad. I could’ve tried different things if I had more jewels.”

“I was told that people who want to ask for commissions have to wait in a line? Would you take multiple orders from one person?”

“Of course! If I can work on more jewels like this, then I will work for you for a lifetime!”

“Lifetime...”

“...”

Elizabeth’s passionate yells toward Grid seemed like she was courting him. Eat Spicy Jokbal and Yura’s troubled gazes worsened at the sight.

“There are dozens of people in my guild with 10 or 20 Belial jewels...” Grid pulled out shocking words.

“...Huh?” Elizabeth doubted her ears.

She had thought that Grid’s 30 jewels were all the jewels which Belial had dropped. It surprised her that there were still hundreds left. Elizabeth started shaking. She shook her head and seemed to decide something. “I will go to the Overgeared Kingdom. This is beyond the concept of a VVIP guest. Since you are the king, can you give me a small workshop? Would it be better for me to join

the Overgeared Guild?”

“ ... ”

“Oh, do I not meet the conditions to join?”

“H-How can that be?”

On this day...

“No, why do you kidnap someone everywhere you go? What the hell are you doing? Do you have a separate human trafficking skill? Do you have a legendary trafficker as a third class? Huh?”

“ ... ”

Grid had a pleasant surprise for Lael after returning with Elizabeth.

Chapter 857

Valhalla's invasion of the Ultina Kingdom was entering the final phase. Ultina's outer fortresses had been destroyed, and the walls of the capital had been smashed through. After the fall of the fortified walls, Valhalla's strong army one-sidedly killed Ultina's weak soldiers who were obedient to the empire.

The reason why the Ultina Kingdom could hold on was thanks to the struggles of the Ultina Guardian Knights, who had completed their fourth class advancement. Pon had watched the news of Valhalla's invasion war when he logged out, and now he raised this question, "Can we just stand by like this?"

Just like the other Overgeared members, Pon was very wary of Valhalla. Overgeared and Valhalla were currently allies due to having a common enemy, the empire. Yet what if Valhalla became an enemy? Fostering Strong Soldiers—Ares' skill which allowed him to raise strong soldiers quickly—was placing enormous pressure on the Overgeared Kingdom.

However, Lael was surprisingly calm. "You don't have to worry. Just leave it alone."

"What? Haven't you heard from the ones who went to support the Valhalla war? Ares' forces will soon become stronger than the Overgeared Kingdom's soldiers. Their numbers are swelling and if they become stronger..."

Lael interrupted Pon's impassioned speech, "Valhalla can become even stronger. No, they must become stronger."

"What?"

Did Lael experience side effects from eating chuuni medicine? Lael's claim that Valhalla should become stronger puzzled Pon. What was the reason for it? Pon could only think of one thing. "If Valhalla is stronger, we can join forces to bring down the empire?"

“Sigh... Sadness burns in my heart which is deeper than the sea... Humans live in a three-dimensional world but why are their thoughts so one-dimensional...”

“...???”

“Pon, think about why you are wary about Valhalla. Do you think they might become an enemy one day?”

“That’s right...”

“Yes. You should know that there are no eternal allies. But think about it. Will you live for eternity?”

“Well...”

What nonsense was this? The confused Pon then suddenly thought of something, and his eyes widened. Lael placed his hand on his forehead and let out a sinister laugh. Pon gulped and asked carefully, “Do you intend to hold hands with the empire?”

“Is there a law saying I can’t?” Grid had already suggested the possibility. The Saharan Empire was different from the great demons. Unless they were absolutely evil, there were no unconditional enemies. So, their relationship could change at any time. “Wait and see. The empire won’t stay still, and the goals of both nations will become bigger and bigger. Don’t forget that we have a friendly relationship with both nations and thus have the advantage, so stay calm.”

“Yes.”

Pon was reminded of something—the Overgeared Kingdom wouldn’t exist if it wasn’t for Lael. If Grid hadn’t grasped Lael’s heart and Lael had become hostile to them, what would’ve happened to the Overgeared Guild now? Pon was horrified just imagining it. Only Lael’s dismal laughter was heard.

Knock knock.

Then someone knocked on the door of the office. Lael

confirmed the time and opened the door with a bright smile. The person who visited his office was none other than...

“Welcome, Eat Spicy Jokbal. Come in.”

“Excuse me.”

Dungeon Maker Eat Spicy Jokbal made dungeons to protect something, trap enemies, or make people grow. His personal strength was estimated to be sun-grade, so Lael, Pon, and the Overgeared Guild welcomed such a great ally. Both Lael and Pon welcomed him with a bright smile.

“...What do you want?” On the other hand, Eat Spicy Jokbal seemed unhappy with the welcome. He was staying in the Overgeared Kingdom because his niece Elizabeth had joined the Overgeared Guild, but he wasn’t eager to join it as well. It was still hard to forgive Grid for causing the collapse of Blood Carnival and taking away the insane dragon egg.

“If you want me to join the guild, stop here. I don’t intend to join the Overgeared Guild. If you want to ask me to make a dungeon, stop. Do you think I would do anything good for you? Bah.” Eat Spicy Jokbal scoffed and turned to leave.

“Have you acquired the cooking skill?” Lael asked a completely random question.

“Huh?”

“What...”

Both Pon and Eat Spicy Jokbal were stunned. Lael asked again, “Aren’t you a professional chef in reality? I think it is likely that you learned cooking in the game.”

“Well... That’s right. Don’t you know that there are many players with cooking skills?”

Cooking was a common skill which could be learned without being a chef. Of course, the skill couldn’t increase to a high level

without being a chef. However, it was better for players to learn basic cooking for long adventures on the road. The same was true for Eat Spicy Jokbal. He was a true jokbal enthusiast who honed his cooking skill in order to be able to make jokbal on the road. For him, Lauel's suggestion was unexpected. "There is a chef called Poison Master in the basement of this castle. Why don't you learn cooking from him?"

"Poison what? What is this?"

Learn cooking from a chef? By the way, why was the name of the chef Poison Master? Eat Spicy Jokbal was speechless for many reasons before realizing something. "Are you trying to trick me into staying in this city for as long as possible?"

"Yes. That's right. If you stay here, won't you end up liking us? Then you might join the Overgeared Kingdom."

"Nonsense! What benefits will I receive from learning to cook from the chef?"

"He is a chef from the East Continent. He can't cook well, but his basic Cooking skill is very high. If you build up an affinity while cooking with him, your Cooking skill level is likely to increase."

"Are you suggesting that I raise my Cooking skill level? Don't you know who I am?"

"I am aware. You are Jang Doksoo, the current president of the Eat Spicy Jokbal Haenam Branch, who was once chairman of the Eat Spicy Jokbal Company's main branch. Don't you want to show off the taste of jokbal to the people of the world who are visiting the Overgeared Kingdom? Don't you want to increase the number of Eat Spicy Jokbal chain stores around the world? Don't you want to recover your position in the Eat Spicy Jokbal company?"

"..."

"How long do you intend to be relegated to Haenam? Recall why you were raising money with Blood Carnival. Do you intend to give

in to the traitors?”

“ ... ”

“You want to watch?” Elizabeth’s round eyes became slightly bigger. She was confused because there was no warning. Elizabeth had never met anyone who wanted to study her work. The delicate and static work was far from a spectacular sight. Other fields only took a few hours while she had to do tedious work for a few days. It was a far cry from the relatively colorful and brilliant blacksmith’s work.

Elizabeth was puzzled and sighed a bit. ‘This person is thinking too simply.’

Accessory makers with the rank of craftsman spent a few hours to many days producing one item. Among them, particularly delicate work would take at least four days. However, a legendary blacksmith was unlikely to know this fact. Why? He could easily make items due to the class compensation effect, and he couldn’t help seeing other people’s work as easy.

‘I’m aware that he demonstrated good skills in the National Competition.’

Yes, Elizabeth didn’t ‘ignore’ Grid. The level of concentration and efficiency that he demonstrated in the National Competition was worthy of praise. It was expected that he had put in a lot of effort to build his current skills. However, Elizabeth was forced to think that Grid put in relatively less effort than people like her who worked hard to build up her skills. It was a reasonable assumption based on the fact that Satisfy was a game.

In the game called Satisfy, the ability of the legendary class was overwhelming. Since Grid was a legendary blacksmith, she couldn’t help thinking that he learned blacksmithing techniques easily.

‘Well, it isn’t his fault.’ Elizabeth’s eyes filled with pity as she looked at Grid, who thought it would be a few hours of easy work. She didn’t hate Grid and realized that she should instead resent the S.A Group for making the blacksmithing job ‘easy’ for him.

“Okay. Feel free to visit although I don’t know how long you will stay.”

At the center of a high-end shopping district which housed a wide range of cosmetic and jewelry stores. There was a colorful and luxurious small store. The sign on the store said ‘Elizabeth’s Workshop’. It was a new workshop the Overgeared Kingdom had set up to welcome Elizabeth, a craftsman level accessories maker. Elizabeth’s eyes were excited as she entered with Grid and looked around. “Both the internal structure and the equipment are amazing... You have thoroughly listened to my requests and even thought about parts that I hadn’t thought of.”

Grid was a delicate man, unlike his outward appearance.

‘Yes, he is a man who cares about details. This is how he was able to get powerhouses to join the Overgeared Guild and how he was able to capture Yura’s heart.’

Elizabeth’s gaze toward Grid changed as she was forced to evaluate Grid much higher than before. However, she had to treat Grid the individual and Grid the legendary blacksmith separately.

“I’ll get started.”

“Yes.”

Elizabeth sat in front of a table and warned as she raised a magnifying glass, “I will warn you, this won’t be fun. You won’t understand by watching from the side. If you become bored, feel free to leave.”

“You are very kind.” Grid didn’t know what Elizabeth thought of him, so he just accepted her warning as goodwill stemming from kindness. Elizabeth was embarrassed by Grid’s bright smile. The

Grid that she had seen in various media outlets was an arrogant person, but wasn't he actually pure enough to feel like an idiot?

The bright smile of an adult man gave off a strange charm, and Elizabeth suddenly became aware that she was in a small space with someone of the opposite sex. Her face turned red as she recalled the exhilarating feeling she'd felt when she shook his hand.

“What is it?”

“N-Nothing! It's nothing!”

Elizabeth ignored the concerned Grid and pulled out the package of jewels. First, she took out 400 Belial C-grade jewels. They were C-grade, but they were much more beautiful and solid compared to the finest rubies and emeralds. The C-grade jewels boasted the splendor and hardness of diamond of the highest grade.

The amazing thing was that these jewels were still close to being gems. It was difficult to predict how much more beautiful they would be after Elizabeth, a craftsman-level accessories maker, worked on them.

“Sigh.” Elizabeth took a deep breath and raised her concentration to the extreme. Then she slowly and carefully started working. Once the marking process was completed, she would cleave, cut, and shape the jewel. Her hands were careful, just like when she had been at the final gateway in the test to become a craftsman, and her concentration was maintained throughout the night.

The next morning...

“Beautiful...” Elizabeth finally had a gorgeously shining jewel in front of her. She gave a bright smile of satisfaction and finally remembered Grid, whom she had forgotten about.

‘I don't even know when he left.’

She had forgotten that he had even been there in the first place. It was the aftermath of being too concentrated.

‘Grid must’ve gone back.’ While thinking this, Elizabeth stretched only to end up screaming, “Kuoooooh... Kyaaack?!”

Grid was still watching her from the spot where he had been sitting yesterday.

“Y-You. What are you doing here?

Grid’s hands were itchy as he responded casually, “Didn’t I say it? I will watch.”

After watching Elizabeth work all night, he got a hint about something.

“The jewels... Depending on the hardness, can they be attached to actual equipment like swords or armor?”

Chapter 858

“The jewels... Depending on the hardness, can they be attached to actual equipment like swords or armor?”

If so, Grid would be able to attach the stats and resistance from Belial’s jewels to his equipment. The combination of battle gear and jewels would lead to the further development of being overgeared. Elizabeth nodded at Grid who was filled with anticipation. “It isn’t a bad idea and is a rather ideal combination. A large number of accessory makers and blacksmiths have already tried it, but they failed.”

This was because there was a fundamental problem.

“The toughness (resistance to breaking) of the jewels isn’t proportional to hardness. Apart from some special jewels, most jewels are easy to break. Even the famous diamonds are vulnerable to shock impact. It is the same for Belial’s jewels. That’s why it is very rare to attach jewels to equipment that aren’t intended for ceremonial and decorative purposes. A solid jewel that continuously receives impact from weapons like a sword or a spear will soon be destroyed.”

“What are shock resistant special gems?”

“They are typically black diamonds. But they are special jewels that I can’t work on. Perhaps it is the realm of a legendary accessories maker...”

“Hrmm...” Disappointment filled Grid’s face. It was annoying to hear that the idea he thought of was useless. However, this only lasted for a moment.

‘Wait?’ Grid was suddenly reminded of a crown. Why had he postponed the production of a crown after becoming the First King? It was because he couldn’t put splendid jewels in the crown which was a symbol of power and honor, but it was also because he

hadn't been able to acquire a skilled accessories maker.

Thus, he had put off making the crown.

Then he remembered something that was buried in his memories...

'I can wear a crown and a helmet at the same time while hiding the appearance of one.'

Grid now had a good accessories maker and large quantities of excellent jewels. He could make a crown with 10 jewels attached, similar to the emperor's crown. That way, his stats would rise significantly. Ordinary people wouldn't wear a crown in battle. The jewels would soon be destroyed, and there would be a large loss of assets. Then what about Grid?

'I can put a helmet over the crown. The abilities of the crown would be applied in full, but there would be no need to worry about the jewels being destroyed.'

One of the greatest benefits of the First King title was the addition of an 'equipment slot' which no one else had. Other people had to choose one item for their head, such as a helmet, hat, crown, and so on, while Grid could wear one crown and one headpiece.

In fact, Grid had used the Holy Light Crown to experiment with adding a helmet over a crown or a crown over a helmet. In other words, by wearing a crown under the helmet, he would be able to apply the crown's abilities while the durability of the crown would be protected by the helmet. He didn't know how it would be for equipment items, but this meant he could attach the jewels to the crown and securely gain the ability to increase his stats with the jewels! Still, there was a problem.

'The helmet must be big enough to wear over the crown.'

In the past three years, Grid had been wearing the Thick Helmet that he'd made along with Triple Layers. As its name suggested,

the Thick Helmet boasted a high physical defense and a large size. It was possible to wear the helmet over the Holy Light Crown.

Then could it be used with a new crown? The answer was NO. Grid wanted to attach as many jewels as possible to the new crown, but he also had to pay attention to the design. The size of the new crown would naturally be larger than the Holy Light Crown, so the helmet that was worn over it naturally had to grow in size.

‘The helmet...’

Grid’s eyes narrowed. If he made a helmet large enough to wear over the crown, he feared that his eyesight would be disturbed and his movements slowed down.

‘Ah?’ Grid saw Elizabeth working on the next jewel and remembered something. It was something that Lim Cheolho had worn when he visited Grid’s house to celebrate his birthday.

‘A cone hat...!’

In standard language, it was a pointed hat—a three-dimensional triangular shaped hat.

‘If I raise the height of the helmet, I will have enough space to wear a crown and my field of view won’t be disturbed because the left and right dimensions are narrow.’

‘Wow, I really am a genius,’ Grid thought about himself admirably.

He only cared about the shape of the crown, which affected a king’s dignity, and didn’t pay attention to the shape of the helmet, but it wasn’t because he was acting stupid again. As a result of the First King title, Grid could choose the ‘exposed appearance’ to be either a helmet or a crown. Once the helmet was worn over the crown, he could choose the appearance of the crown and then get the ‘cool’ effect.

Grid was thinking along when he suddenly started to laugh, causing Elizabeth to look at him. “Did something good happen?”

Then Grid asked her, “Is there a limit on the number of jewels that can be attached to an item? For example, how many jewels can be attached to a ring?”

“I can attach dozens of small jewels. But then the ring won’t have a function.”

“Why?”

“The jewels need to be a certain size to show a good performance. The performance of the jewels will disappear if they are too small.”

“Ah... Then the rings that players wear only have one jewel?”

“That’s right.”

“How many jewels can be attached to a crown before the performance is lost?”

“10. Shouldn’t you know this since you have directly met the emperor? There are a total of 10 jewels embedded in the emperor’s crown.”

“Yes.”

“That is the best number. Compared to necklaces where three jewels can be attached, the crown is the best item to raise the power of the jewels to the limit. Of course, the only person who can fight with a jeweled crown is the emperor.”

‘No, there’s another person here.’ Grid smiled while suppressing the words in his throat.

Elizabeth asked, “I assume the jewels initially crafted will be used by the other Overgeared members and not by you?”

“Why?”

“This is the first time I have worked on Belial’s jewels. The quality of the jewels at the start will inevitably be low. The options of the jewels crafted later will be better. You should make accessories out of the later jewels.”

“No. I will make it with the initial jewels.”

“Didn’t you hear my explanation? The jewels worked on initially are relatively inferior. Look at this.” Elizabeth handed Grid the Belial’s Black Jewel that she had worked on all night.

Grid looked at the information of the jewel.

[Plainly Crafted Belial’s Black Jewel (C)]

[* Intelligence +6.

* Shadow Resistance +2%

A black jewel crafted by Elizabeth, a craftsman level accessory maker. It is not bad.]

“The next few jewels will be better as I become more proficient. At that time, ‘delicately crafted’ or ‘perfectly crafted’ jewels can be found. Then the additional stats will increase by at least 1–3.”

Grid wasn’t a kid, so did she have to explain such things? Elizabeth had met many clients and was well aware of human greed. In particular, the greed of the top rankers couldn’t be controlled, and they always wanted to get the best jewels. That’s right. Elizabeth thought that Grid wanted the best jewels to make the accessories out of, so the more inferior jewels would be left to Grid’s subordinates. However, an unexpected answer was received.

“Give the better jewels to my colleagues. I am strong enough without the jewels.”

“What?”

Grid’s ID had the meaning of greed. In fact, Grid came across as greedy through all media platforms. So, was he acting right now? No, he wasn’t. She couldn’t see any pretenses in Grid’s expression and attitude. Grid smiled warmly at the baffled Elizabeth.

“The stronger my colleagues, the stronger I am. I want my colleagues to be strong for myself and for them.”

“You...”

“Oh, I might’ve wanted good jewels if I didn’t have the S-grade jewels.

“...”

“Someday you will be able to make S-grade jewelry, right? Until then, I am happy to wait.”

‘Ah, there are many types of people in this world.’

Elizabeth felt she shouldn’t judge people by their appearance. The 20-year-old young woman who had just entered university gained a new enlightenment. There was a faint sense of trust in her eyes as she looked at Grid.

‘The Overgeared Guild... It might be good to stay for a while.’

“Hrmmm.”

It was the fourth day after Elizabeth started working. Elizabeth’s speed of working on the jewels increased slightly as she rapidly accumulated skill experience. She worked on jewels all night and then laughed at the sight of Grid.

“Oppa is really incredible.”

She wasn’t surprised anymore. The patience Grid displayed as he sat by her side for four days was beyond Elizabeth’s expectations.

She sat down next to Grid and gave a small nod. “Now I understand. It was never easy for Oppa. You are always cautious and invest a lot of time into your work.”

“That’s right. How can anything be easy in this world?”

Elizabeth naturally called Grid ‘Oppa’. Since he was a fellow Korean who was older than her, she was embarrassed to call him by name. However, they had become familiar in the process of staying in the workshop together and overcoming prejudices.

Additionally, Elizabeth was the same age as his younger sister, so

Grid didn't dislike Elizabeth's attitude change. Rather, she seemed like a cute little sister. Grid also spoke in a casual manner with Elizabeth, "Aren't you tired from working all night? Do you want a massage?"

Despite his words, Grid was also very tired. He had designed a new crown and helmet while watching Elizabeth work. Then when Elizabeth logged out, he went to the hunting grounds to raise the Overgeared Skeletons' levels. Grid had spent these last four days like he had two or three bodies. That's why his head was in a muddled state and he carelessly talked about a massage.

"Really? I would appreciate it," Elizabeth accepted Grid's offer with a wide smile. Grid smiled back and touched Elizabeth's shoulders without any hidden intentions.

"Ah...!" Elizabeth's large eyes and white shoulders shook as soon as Grid touched her. The tired Grid didn't notice the subtle change and put more strength in his fingertips.

"Haat!"

As soon as Grid's big and hard fingers pressed against her neck, Elizabeth felt strength drain from her body. She couldn't help leaning back on Grid's wide chest. Her eyes lost light as she gazed at the ceiling. The sensations running through her body were beyond description...

Eat Spicy Jokbal had come to visit his niece at her workshop before going to work in the kitchen.

"What are you doing noooooow?!!" His loud and furious voice rang out through the workshop. "You are worse than a beast! You already have two girlfriends, yet you are touching my niece...!!"

"No, I don't have a girlfriend..."

"What? You have Yura and Jishuka! I'm envious... No, you are a bad guy! You are the enemy of all men!"

"What the hell... Hik!" Grid was forced to leave the workshop

because he was kicked out by the furious sword-wielding Eat Spicy Jokbal. Then Grid ran toward the smithy. ‘What is wrong with Eat Spicy Jokbal in the morning? Sigh, let’s make a helmet and a crown.’

Chapter 859

[Rating: Legendary (Set)

Durability: 180/180 Defense: 20

* Intelligence +300

* Dignity +200

-When 3 set items are equipped: Defense +500, health +6,000.

-A crown that the legendary blacksmith Pagma made for 5th Pope Franz.]

This was the crown that Grid had favored for numerous years. He always used this shining crown for official events or when using magic. Grid rotated the small crown hanging from his fingertips. He watched the Holy Light Crown, which had already been used, disassemble and reassemble several times to raise the understanding to 100%.

‘The crown is an accessory, not a defense equipment.’

Unlike a helmet designed for defense, it was easy to aim for stats or options depending on the design. As a special equipment only allowed for those on the throne, the value of the crown was very high. In fact, the crown, which Grid had designed for the purpose of ‘showing off’ after founding the Overgeared Kingdom, had 190 dignity attached to it.

‘This time, my crown will be designed for battle.’

Due to the influence of his production intent, there was a great deal of room to raise battle-related stats.

‘If I add the 10 jewels that Elizabeth crafted...’

Based on the C-grade jewels, he could gain an addition 60 strength and 20% attribute resistance. Grid’s desire to use Braham’s enhanced magic, which could be obtained once his intelligence increased, caused his motivation to flare up.

“Let’s start the production!”

“His Majesty is starting to work!”

“Gather all the blacksmiths in Reinhardt!”

“Ohhhhhh!”

As hundreds of people gathered in a huge smithy, Grid started the production of the new crown he had designed in the last four days. It was a new crown based on the Holy Light Crown and the crown of the Saharan Empire.

Unlike with ordinary crowns, he chose to use mithril instead of gold and silver for this one. Mithril was stronger and lighter than gold and silver, and it also possessed a high rate of assimilation with attributes. Additionally, it had a silver color which Grid thought matched better with his black hair.

In fact, he wanted to use the Seolkwang Stone which was harder and more expensive than mithril but had the same silver color. However, there was none in the auction house, and Grid wasn’t in a position to secure it. He only knew about the presence of the ore through Pagma’s knowledge, and he hadn’t handled it directly.

‘Well, I can make the crown again once it became available at a later time.’

Belial’s red and black jewels only raised intelligence. There would come a time when he needed a crown which gave him other stats. Grid made the crown while thinking this. Velvet didn’t cover the crown, which was light and oval-shaped, closely resembling a tiara.

Grid melted the mithril in the extremely high temperature of the furnace.

‘Is it over?’

This was after the battle at Gerad Mountain. Yura had returned

to the Overgeared Kingdom with Grid and Elizabeth. Now she was waiting for the right opportunity to report what she had seen in hell—Grid’s clone that was a named class NPC. In fact, this was a touchy subject for Grid. Think about it. How creepy and unpleasant would it be to realize that someone who looked exactly like you was currently ‘living’ somewhere else?

Yura decided not to talk about the clone until Grid completed his current project. She was afraid that she might disturb his concentration.

“It is finished!”

After spending four days in Elizabeth’s workshop and a week in the smithy, Grid finally solved the task at hand. The rumor that he was making a new crown and helmet had already spread among the Overgeared members.

“You worked hard!”

“What fraudulent item did you make this time?”

Grid rarely produced items with a bad performance. The members of the Overgeared Guild gathered after hearing the news and showed interest in their shining eyes. Yura was among them. She wanted to see the crown and helmet that Grid made before telling him about the clone.

‘They will definitely be wonderful and excellent items.’

Yura’s and the Overgeared members’ expectations were rising.

“I’m looking forward to it!” Elizabeth now treated Grid with affection. This was a sharp contrast to her unfriendly attitude one week ago. She looked like a doll and was very cute when she attached the title of Oppa to him.

“The new member is cute.”

“She is a great talent.”

“I feel like I have a lovely and dependable little sister.”

Yura felt somehow annoyed when all the Overgeared members looked at Elizabeth with a gentle expression.

“It is thanks to Elizabeth.” Grid couldn’t read Yura’s emotions and stroked Elizabeth’s head before pulling out the crown. It was a crown embedded with the ten jewels which Elizabeth had crafted. The crown of mithril shone in the light while the ten jewels were of a darker red than a ruby. The red jewels seemed to have a darkness that was deeper than an abyss. They weren’t that flashy, but they felt elegant.

Everyone gulped as Grid placed the crown on his head. Grid could no longer have short hair after becoming king, so he had grown it to a moderate length. The blend of his sharp eyes, his black hair, and the beautiful silver crown displayed a neutral charm.

“Ah...”

His body was tempered, and his face had matured as he grew older and experienced all types of things. Compared to last year, Grid’s appearance had improved, and the Overgeared members felt an affinity with him, regardless of their gender. Everyone felt a great attraction toward Grid.

Duguen, duguen. In the silent smithy, someone’s heart was beating exceptionally loudly. This sound didn’t last long though.

“Next is this.” Grid placed the helmet over the crown. It was a helmet in the form of a cone and had a height of at least 50 centimeters.

“...”

Dignity could no longer be seen in Grid’s appearance as he wore the iron cone hat. Everyone was speechless, and someone burst out laughing. The silence was broken.

“Puhahaha! What? Look at that stupid appearance! Puhahahat!”

“Vantner, why are you laughing? I think it is better to wear that helmet than to be bald.”

“Pon, you son of a bitch!”

“...”

Was it that funny? Grid was puzzled by the people’s response and stood in front of a mirror. There was an alien in the mirror. An alien with a long and pointed head. It was almost as if...

“...I look like a squid.”

Yes, he was an ugly squid. Grid’s face reddened, and he used the First King title effect.

“Hide the helmet.”

[The appearance of the helmet has been hidden to keep the dignity of the first king. The appearance is now hidden but the ability remains.]

“Phew...” Grid sighed with relief as he checked his appearance in the mirror. The feeling of wearing the heavy helmet disappeared while the stats remained intact. He was shown to be wearing a crown again, so he was no longer a squid. Lael approached Grid who was feeling relieved. Strangely, Lael’s expression was very serious. He looked like a man going to a funeral. Had something bad happened?

“What is it? What’s going on?” Grid noticed the atmosphere and felt worried.

“Your Majesty,” Lael spoke in a trembling voice, “Please don’t even show that appearance again. I almost quit the guild. I felt a pain similar to losing my sight forever.”

“...” For the first time, Grid was able to understand Lael’s feelings. He hurriedly nodded and defended himself, “I will always hide the image like this. Don’t worry.”

“Why did you make the helmet look like that in the first place?”

“I thought it would be more comfortable to wear over a crown... Don’t worry. It looks like that, but the performance is impressive.”

“Of course, it should be. It doesn’t make sense if the performance is as garbage as the appearance. The performance should be equivalent to a myth rated item.”

“...” Grid thought that it couldn’t be like this. He judged that he should share the item information to calm down the atmosphere as soon as possible.

Ttiring~

[Player Grid wishes to share the item information with you. Would you like to accept?]

This message appeared in front of all the Overgeared members, and they naturally accepted.

[Overgeared King’s Crown]

[Rating: Legendary

Durability: 270/270 Defense: 33

Defense +60

Intelligence +65

Dignity +400

Fire resistance +20%

Shadow Resistance +15%

* There is a low probability of ‘confusing’ anyone who looks at it.

* Maintains loyalty without needing to give a gift.

A crown created through the collaboration of Grid, a legendary blacksmith who is becoming a myth, and the craftsman level Accessory Maker Elizabeth. It is beautiful and elegant. The household gods are very proud of the person who wears this crown.

The magic power of Great Demon Belial contained in the jewels often makes people confused.

Conditions of Use: Grid.

Weight: 267]

[Cone Helmet]

[Rating: Legendary (Degraded)

Durability: 496/496 Defense: 450

-A cone-shaped helmet.

It is made by the blacksmith Grid who is becoming a myth beyond a legend.

The material is very hard because Grid spent a few days tempering the iron mixed with a small amount of Belial's leather.

However, the debate on its appearance will never end. It is hard to see the intentions of the cone shape.

It has enough defense to be a legendary item for a long time, but the appearance...

* The stats have room to fall depending on the behavior of the wearer.

User Restriction: More than 3,000 strength. Level 340 or more.

Weight: 4,820]

“What...”

The Overgeared King's Crown suited its name, and the helmet's name and description matched its appearance. They seemed to be great items, yet...

The Overgeared members felt both confusion and admiration. It was the same symptoms that Grid had experienced after completing the items. That's right. Grid had been in great chaos from producing a bizarre legendary item labeled as 'degraded.'

“Well... either way, a legend is a legend...”

In fact, the performance was legendary. The helmet contained a

defense equivalent to armor of the same level. Grid was feeling satisfied with this reaction when Yura approached him.

“I have something to tell you. Do you know about your clone?”

“My clone?”

What was this? Grid’s face turned red as he thought about it. There was only one thing that popped up when hearing of a ‘clone.’

“Did you think of something?”

“N-No, what is this?”

“I saw it in hell, your clone.”

“What? Hell?”

Why was his clone in hell? Grid stopped as his hand was moving to his crotch to check. Something crossed his mind.

“Can you tell me more?”

Simultaneously, at the Yatan temple...

“There is a rumor that a vile traitor is poking around our sanctuary. Show the traitor our god’s power. The other Yatan Servants will help you.”

“Yes! I gladly do so!”

Rose, who had been able to become the 1st ranked black magician thanks to Yura’s absence, received a hidden quest. It was the largest quest since the one to summon Belial.

Chapter 860

‘Very good.’

The result of the Overgeared King’s Crown was better than Grid had expected. It was honestly surprising that his crown was superior to the legendary set item, the Holy Light Crown, which Pagma had made.

‘It is inevitable that the intelligence given is low.’

The Overgeared King’s Crown had been produced with the intention of increasing Grid’s physical combat power. So, it was natural to end up with a crown which gave defense instead of intelligence. He only got the additional 65 intelligence due to Belial’s jewels.

‘I’m a bit disappointed with the lack of force...’

Still, Grid knew the power of the ‘confusion’ abnormal status. A confused target would lose attack power and have their defense lowered. This ‘confusion’ effect attached to the Overgeared King’s Crown comforted Grid.

The confusion state attached to the crown was likely to mislead everyone who looked at the wearer. It was a passive skill with no mana consumption or cooldown time, and it could also be a wide-range CC skill. This effect wasn’t just like a scam. It was so good that it was almost criminal.

“Hrmm... By the way...”

Grid seriously observed his ‘dull but decent’ appearance in the mirror. The existence of the clone that Yura told him about was constantly on his mind. He thought about the clone he’d met on the Behen Archipelago. That clone had fully understood and used the potential of the Pagma’s Descendant class. He had shown great skill and given Grid a sense of helplessness by using fusion skills that Grid had yet to become capable of.

Before the clone, Grid had been at the level of a young child. As the battle continued, the gap with the clone had increased rather than narrowed, and it then reached a stage where Grid thought it would be impossible to win. He ended up knocking the clone down by relying on the Motley Flail as a last resort...

‘That guy died while using Blackening.’

Grid had experienced it personally. He had died in the blackened state and fallen to hell previously. Was it the same for the clone?

‘What if due to some error, the clone literally settled in hell?’

Yura stated that his clone was in the blackened state.

‘I’m certain. I was banished from hell once Blackening was released. What if the clone couldn’t remove Blackening and he stayed in hell?’

Grid made a nervous expression. He was afraid that this opponent, who he hadn’t been able to beat, had not died and might still be looking for him. Grid had obtained 100,000 Army Swordsmanship, steadily improved his items, gained the power of great demons, and so on... So, why did he feel fearful when he was so strong?

It was because it wouldn’t be easy. Yura reported that the clone had used a five-technique fusion skill. He had also shown off a whole new technique called Flower. Flower was easy to interpret as the clone opening up the potential of Pagma’s Descendant, and Grid hoped that he could learn it someday. However...

‘What the hell is a linked five-technique skill?’

Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle—the reason Grid had been able to combine these four skills was due to Goddess Rebecca’s blessing. Thanks to a god’s help, he had learned a sword technique which could threaten the gods. In the aftermath, he had received backlash from the other gods.

‘This technique has four skills...

Yet the clone fused five skills? Grid found it hard to understand. Doubts rose with him about whether Yura was mistaken about what she had seen. Then he thought of one hypothesis.

‘Did the clone receive Yatan’s blessing? Then that would mean it is possible to fuse five skills by using the unique potential of Pagma’s Descendant...’

No matter how he thought about it, Grid didn’t know the answer. He trembled with nervousness as his thoughts had become complicated.

“No, what are the great demons doing... Ah?”

Grid was amazed by something. He belatedly recalled the surprise that 32nd Great Demon Belial had shown back when he appeared and how she had called him a ‘soulless man.’

‘Was she talking about the clone?’

In other words, the great demons were also aware of the existence of the clone. Belial, in particular, was wary about him. Grid was able to infer that they didn’t have a good relationship. Indeed, the clone hadn’t died and was instead alive in hell. There was only one conclusion.

The present clone that made even great demons wary...

“Wow, I’m going crazy.”

The clone had been born in order to kill Grid. If he was alive, then Grid would forever need to be vigilant, causing Grid to feel a greater sense of despair the stronger he became. Grid crouched down in frustration.

“Father.” A small boy approached him. The boy’s blue eyes were large and deep. He had inherited his mother’s milky skin and his father’s black hair. The name of the beautiful boy with a promising future was Lord.

“Lord, what’s going on? Don’t you have to get up early tomorrow

to go to the Vatican?”

For Grid, Lord was his real flesh and blood. He truly loved Lord. Grid hugged Lord because he was worried about his son. Lord giggled as he felt his father's big and warm arms! He smiled shyly with a red face. “It's nothing. I came to see Father.”

“That's great. My Lord, you can come see me at any time. I will always welcome you.”

“Uhh, no. Lord doesn't want to hinder Father with my greed. Father is busy protecting the kingdom and its people. I'll come and see you occasionally.”

“Lord...” Grid patted Lord's head, and his eyes became wet from Lord's remarkable consideration. This was why he felt warm. Yes, Lord was real. At least in this world, Lord was a real human and he was Grid's blood.

Kiss.

How good would it be if they were together in reality? Grid swallowed his regrets and kissed the back of his son's small head.

“Father, if you have any difficulties, put them behind you. Lord will grow quickly so I can protect Father.”

“...Yes.”

At this moment, Grid decided that he would bring peace to the Overgeared Kingdom before Lord became an adult. He would ensure that this lovely child would never have to go through hardships.

‘Clone, you are just a fragment of me.’

Grid would destroy all beings that threatened him and his surroundings. At this thought, Grid's gaze became colder than moonlight.

“Go well.”

The morning sun tinged Reinhardt with gold. In the early morning, the streets were peaceful and beautiful, but not all the city landscapes were as good as here.

“I hope you have a comfortable trip.”

In Grid’s eyes, Irene was the most beautiful woman in the world. There was deep affection in Grid’s eyes as he kissed her cheek. He was grateful and proud of his loving and wise wife.

“Father! Me too!” Lord spread open his arms as he asked for a kiss.

Grid kissed Lord’s cute cheek and then spoke to Kasim, “You are responsible for their safety regardless of the circumstances.”

“Of course,” Kasim’s voice which emerged from the shadows gave a strong sense of trust to Grid. Irene and Lord had received Pope Damian’s invitation and was going to visit the Vatican. The destination was safe, and the escorts were amazing. King of Shadows Kasim, the knight Chucksley, Royman, and the Rebecca’s Daughters candidates were escorting Irene and Lord. It wouldn’t happen but even Agnus wouldn’t be able to easily break through this guard.

‘Is this enough?’

Grid’s eyes shifted to Mercedes standing by his side. Mercedes read Grid’s anxiety and asked, “Do you want me to join the escort?”

Although Mercedes’ top priority was Grid’s safety, she realized on the day they met Merchant King Kir that Grid wanted her to be flexible. As such, Mercedes was willing to leave Grid for a short while if that was what he desired. Grid thought about it before shaking his head. “No, that isn’t necessary.”

There were already enough escorts. Damian would also be sending a separate escort. Irene and Lord were safe, and it would be a waste of manpower to send more escorts. Grid was a king and

knew how to separate public and private matters. He decided that it wasn't right to attach Mercedes as an escort.

“Go safely.” Grid smiled while waving. He watched until the carriage carrying Lord and Irene completely disappeared from view.

“Kik? What?” The man with green hair burst out laughing. Once his big mouth opened from left to right, white pointed teeth were revealed. Agnus dwelled in his madness for a moment before calming down. “I was told that according to the terms of the contract, you need to help with the raid on the Vatican.”

A contract existed between Agnus and the Yatan Church. Agnus would be helped in the process of making the Stone of Life while the Yatan Church could take advantage of his strength. In the first place, Baal's Contractor had an inseparable relationship with the Yatan Church.

“Hrmm...” The smile disappeared from Agnus' face. He checked the contents of the quest and finally got up. “Well, it can't be helped.”

For Agnus, the Yatan Church was a necessary force, so he was forced to accept the quest to maintain his favor with them.

Rose's face became radiant when she received his answer. At this point, she still had no idea that the trump card she had prepared would end up grabbing her ankles. It was naturally hard to imagine.

The Vatican was busy. There was a lot of work to be done since the queen and prince of the Overgeared Kingdom, who had a deep relationship with the Rebecca Church, was visiting the Vatican personally. Still, Damian was looking forward to it. It was difficult to imagine how strong Lord's divine power had become after all

this time.

Isabel, Rebecca's Daughter, started scolding him, "Please take care of your body."

"Hum hum, if Isabel-chan says so."

In the distance, carriages were moving up the foothills and entering the Vatican. The carriage which arrived before the statue of Goddess Rebecca was large and gorgeous. Everyone was able to have a glimpse of the considerable wealth that the Overgeared Kingdom had accumulated.

"Ohh...!" The Rebecca believers found a young boy getting off the carriage and let out a burst of exclamations. In particular, the elders felt in awe of him. They hadn't been expecting much, but now their attitudes changed. They hurriedly went down the stairs and greeted Lord personally. This was how they evaluated Lord:

"A true pope!"

"No, why was a pope born to the Overgeared King...?"

Damian felt slightly burdened. The elders around him were busy talking about Lord, and the lonely Damian buried his face in Isabel's shoulder. Then Lord discovered him and shouted, "Teacher Damian!"

"You came! My cute Lord-chan!"

The boy who stole the hearts of the Rebecca's Daughter candidates and the Rebecca's Daughters met after a long time. Was it an illusion that the face of Rebecca looking down at them from the statue was slightly dark today? Isabel felt vaguely anxious.

Chapter 861

Damian heard that she had entered her 30s, yet Irene was still pure and beautiful. She didn't look like she had aged at all. Irene had already been a perfect woman even before she matured.

‘She is older than Grid.’

There was a bittersweet smile on Damian's face as he watched Irene put down her cup of tea. He was also in love with Isabel, so he felt that the gap between players and NPCs was painful and sad. Irene was looking affectionately at her son, Lord, who was embarrassed about being stuck between the bald elders. Damian continued to smile as he also turned his attention to Lord. “Prince Lord has better manners now. Despite his innate talent that pierces the heavens, his humble and upright nature is thanks to your hard work.”

“No. The prince was born with a good heart.”

Personality wasn't something that could be resolved merely through education alone. Irene was a prominent noble from the fallen Eternal Kingdom, and she had witnessed numerous corrupted aristocrats. Didn't they hurt the weak with ease and only care about their own interests despite what they'd been taught? Thus, Irene was always grateful to Lord. She was proud of her son who respected everyone, regardless of their status.

‘He is like Grid.’ Irene smiled when she thought of her husband. It would be the same even if she knew about Grid's earlier personality. To her, Grid was everything.

“...”

Under the sunlight, Irene's smile was lovely. Damian's and Isabel's cheeks flushed red as they gazed at her. Then Damian shook his head and rose from his seat. “Hum hum. Elders, don't bother Prince Lord since he must be tired. I will take him back.”

Damian said goodbye to Irene and crossed the green grass. His gait contained the aggressiveness of a paladin, rather than the nobility of a priest. It was one of the reasons why the elders didn't like Damian. Nevertheless, were there any humans in the world with no shortcomings? Not all the elders felt frustrated about Damian. Some of them acknowledged him, while others had high expectations for him. In fact, Damian was a great pope when compared to the fallen Pope Drevigo and the snake-like candidate, Pascal. So, it was best for the church that the elders supported Pope Damian, who was already in his third year.

“Elders, let the prince go. The prince will suffocate from the smell of old bachelors.”

“Cough...”

The elders, who were obsessed with the divine power that Lord gave off, regained their spirits belatedly. They were ashamed that they had forgotten about the boy's suffering and now tried to give him a helping hand. However, they were smiling instead of blushing with shame.

“Prince Lord, I'll see you at dinner. Let's talk again.”

“Prince, don't forget to pray to Goddess Rebecca.”

“The goddess will bless you...”

The elders bowed before stepping back. They were completely fascinated by Lord's divine power and spoke to him like he was the goddess' messenger. Lord was finally able to breathe after they retreated! He gasped for air as Damian shrugged and said, “Sometimes, it is okay to be immature. If you already care about the eyes of others at this age, you will soon become old.”

“I'd rather become old than embarrass Father.”

“Ah...”

Lord's behavior was praiseworthy. Still, Damian felt regretful and patted Lord's hair unconsciously.

“Oh, I’m sorry.”

No matter how young Lord was, he was still the prince of a kingdom, so it was very rude for Damian to place his hands on Lord’s head. Damian was still apologizing when Lord entered his arms.

“Please stroke my hair, Teacher.”

“Haat! Lord-chan, so cute!”

In the end...

“Your Holiness! This rudeness...!”

“Think about your dignity, Your Holiness!”

Damian was laughing while acting as Lord’s horse! He laughed loudly as he ran through the gardens of the Vatican, while the panicked Isabel and Rebecca’s Daughters tried to stop him. Irene was happy to see this peaceful sight as she sat under the shade of a tree. Meanwhile, the Overgeared Knights escorting her and Lord were stunned. It was amazing that the Rebecca Church’s pope, one of the biggest powers next to the Saharan Empire, was treating their little prince as his nephew. They felt proud, and a chill ran down their spines.

In particular, Coke felt very proud.

‘The relationship between the Overgeared Kingdom and the Rebecca Church is deeper than the rumors say. It is good that I came to the Overgeared Kingdom.’

Coke—as one of the third generation 10 Rookies, he had recognized the potential of the Overgeared Kingdom early on. Back when he had been convinced that he was a genius, he traveled to the fortified city of Patrian and was then beaten by a bone Piaro had thrown. Convinced about the future of the Overgeared Kingdom, Coke had traveled there as soon as it was founded.

After some years, he was inducted as a knight of the Overgeared

Kingdom. It was a result of his pure abilities. Even if Grid didn't know him, Coke was loyal to Grid and was determined to live for the Overgeared Kingdom. He didn't doubt that the Overgeared Kingdom would unite the continent sometime in the future, and he dreamed of later becoming a noble of the Overgeared Kingdom.

Why was he taking the hard path? Some people would say that Coke's evaluation was wrong. They thought Coke was stupid because he would be able to have a more stable future in the empire with his talent. Of course, Coke had also been hesitant. In particular, he had heard rumors at the founding of the Overgeared Kingdom that they were hostile to the empire and seriously wondered if he should join the empire.

However, Coke wasn't a person to easily reverse a decision once he made it. Additionally, he was a solid fan of Grid. Coke believed in Grid and the Overgeared Guild. Then the Overgeared Kingdom ended up being the first in history to make a truce with the empire. Now, Coke was no longer nervous. He watched the Overgeared Kingdom develop while he honed his skills and faithfully performed his role.

"Sir Coke?"

"Ah, I'm sorry."

Coke was watching Damian and Lord laugh in the garden when a voice called out to him. Knight Royman gave him a warning, "Have you forgotten the basic rules of an escort? You have to pay more attention when the surroundings are safe."

Royman spoke in a bold voice deliberately, unaware that her gender had already been discovered. She didn't notice that her colleagues left every time she entered the shower or the changing rooms. However, her skills were real. Her level was 320. It was only 19 levels higher than Coke's, but she was twice as strong as him.

Moreover, it wasn't just in comparison to Coke. Royman was

uniquely strong among the Overgeared Kingdom's knights that Asmophel raised. There was a lot of speculation that Royman had gotten a hidden class or skill after working in the fields with Piaro.

"Yes, I will keep that in mind," Coke replied with the appropriate tension. He adjusted his position so that he could see both Irene and Lord simultaneously. It wasn't simply to build up goodwill with Royman though. Coke, who hoped to be a noble of the thriving Overgeared Kingdom, wanted Grid to win, and he felt responsible for ensuring Irene and Lord's safety.

'There are many notable people.' Coke's gaze was directed at the bottom of the hill. A parade of carriages carrying royalty from all over the continent continued to enter the Vatican. There was also a carriage with the flag of the Saharan Empire. All the countries, apart from the warring countries of Valhalla and Ultina, were gathered here to celebrate Damian's time as pope.

'An imperial prince came...!' Coke was shocked when he witnessed a carriage drawn by four white horses.

It was 2nd Prince Dulandal. Coke hadn't known that one of the greatest powers of the empire would be here and realized just how great of a presence the Rebecca Church really was on the continent. Damian put Lord down. "Lord-chan, return to your quarters with your mother. Rest and I will see you at dinner."

"Yes," Lord replied gently, not expressing his desire to keep playing with Damian. He was a bright child and understood Damian's position. Once Damian left to meet the royal family of every nation, including the empire...

"Place the golden statue over there."

"Station the 4th Knights Division at the entrance of the village. We have to pay as much attention to security as we do our VIPs."

The elders were bustling around the Vatican. They weren't interested in any of the guests, unlike with Lord. In fact, they

didn't even pay attention to the emperor of the empire. This was natural since the Rebecca Church was a transcendent collective. They didn't kneel before power. After Grid cleaned up Pope Drevigo and Pascal's forces, the Rebecca Church was now regaining its full power.

Coke felt more fulfilled as he escorted Irene and Lord. It was interesting and enjoyable for him to know that the arrogant elders treated Prince Lord in a special way.

Step, step.

In a red-carpeted corridor, as Lord led the procession to the room assigned to them, he whispered in a small voice, "Teacher, do you feel uncomfortable?"

A voice was heard from the shadows, -No...I'm fine...

It was Kasim. He said he was fine, but his voice was trembling. In fact, he wasn't okay. 2nd Prince Dulandal of the Saharan Empire—the person who had just stepped into the Vatican—was the one responsible for the destruction of the Nero. Kasim couldn't suppress the anger and resentment that boiled in his heart when he saw his enemy. It was hard for him to keep his cool.

Chucksley noticed his struggling heart and said, "You shouldn't cause any incidents."

-I know, Kasim answered nervously. The laughter disappeared from Lord's face as he overheard the conversation between the two people.

On the other hand, all three people weren't aware of the subtle changes in the atmosphere. Irene and the Rebecca's Daughters candidates were having a friendly conversation while the young knights, including Royman and Coke, were only concerned with the security of the party.

Dark clouds were once again covering the sky. The sound of thunder outside the windows was heavy and loud. Simultaneously,

at the top of Kay Mountain which overlooked the white buildings of the Vatican...

“Crazy monsters have gathered.” Agnus laughed as he arrived late at the location of the appointment. Rain soaked his feet while images of the Yatan Servants were projected into the sky.

Chapter 862

Yatan's Eighth Servant, Yura—she was a traitor.

Yatan's Seventh Servant, Dark Bus—he died during the mission to infiltrate the Saharan Empire.

Yatan's Sixth Servant, Malacus—he died while preparing a ritual in Winston.

Yatan's Fourth Servant, Neberius—he died during the invasion of Bairan.

Yatan's First Servant, Tallos—he died due to an unidentified magician who invaded the Yatan headquarters.

This was the record of the former Yatan's Servants. It was a shame that the Yatan Church wanted to erase. Those chosen by Great Demon Amoract to serve the evil god, Yatan, had been murdered by unknown people. It was a disgrace.

Likaos was appointed as Amoract's agent after Tallos died. On the surface, he was Yatan's First Servant, and he gave this command to the other servants, "The beasts who serve Rebecca and the people devoted to catering to them will gather at the Vatican. This is an opportunity to sweep up these bastards. Destroy the Vatican and reestablish the fallen status of the Yatan Church!"

Likaos calculated that the present Rebecca's Daughters were near the end of their lives. The curse of the Rebecca Church's three divine artifacts meant they were no more than dead bodies, while the newly recruited Yatan's Servants were young and strong.

With these in mind, Likaos saw a golden opportunity to cause chaos. Apart from the Rebecca Church, this was a great chance to deal a blow to the empire and other kingdoms. So, Likaos sent out five Yatan's Servants and requested cooperation from Baal's Contractor.

“Kik? Crazy monsters have gathered.”

The top of Kay Mountain was soaked with heavy rains. Rose who was the 1st ranked black magician and Yatan's Eighth Servant, Baal's Contractor Agnus, and the other four Yatan's Servants looked down at the Vatican.

The so-called Overgeared King? He had the power to ruin the Vatican twice over, but the Yatan Church couldn't be afraid of one person. The Red Knights escorting the imperial prince? They were people who had lost the emperor's trust and were on the brink of ruin. Rebecca's Daughters? They were worn down by the divine artifacts and were on the brink of death.

“How trivial.”

This was the previous impression Likaos had of Yatan's Servants, and Agnus agreed with it. However, the power here was overwhelmingly strong. Agnus judged this due to the wave of shadows moving behind him. They were the shadows of thousands of black magicians who had been discretely moved here.

“Haha, I see.”

“As expected from Prince Dulandal.”

“I can't stop admiring you!”

The scenery of the dinner banquet was no different from people's expectations. Most of the royal families of other nations were gathered around the empire's 2nd prince, Dulandal. He was said to be far from the succession since he was behind the 1st Prince supported by the emperor and the 4th Prince supported by the empress, but his name was still famous. Dulandal had the power to collapse a small kingdom in one morning, so it was natural for the small royal families dependent on the empire to curry favor with him.

“Hrmm...” Dulandal's gaze shifted from these royal families

toward a corner of the room. A woman with silver hair was shining under the lights. Her beauty, which was rare even in the empire, attracted Dulandal's attention. Dulandal especially liked the woman's gentle impression. "Who is that?"

Once Dulandal expressed interest, the royal families explained, "The Overgeared Queen."

"Hoh... The wife of the Overgeared King?"

The Overgeared King—he was the opponent who made the empire attempt 'diplomacy' for the first time in history. Emperor Juander, who wasn't afraid to invade anywhere on the continent, was wary enough of the Overgeared King to invite him as a state guest.

"Too bad." Dulandal emptied his drink. He thought it was a trick of fate that this woman had fallen in love with the Overgeared King first. The next person to attract his attention was a young boy. This boy had ocean blue eyes like the Overgeared Queen who attracted his attention just a short moment ago. An innate grace was felt from the boy's white skin and ebony hair.

"What about that kid?"

"He is the Overgeared Prince."

"Hoh..."

The son of the Overgeared King... What type of vessel was he? With his interest piqued, Dulandal moved his feet. The prince of the Fold Kingdom, who was standing with Lord, was stunned when Dulandal approached.

'I didn't know that an imperial prince would come...!'

The Fold Kingdom had become a tributary of the Overgeared Kingdom during the founding ceremony. After that, they had stopped all exchanges with the empire and left their fate with the Overgeared Kingdom. However, the slavery which had been imprinted in their genes for generations wasn't something that

could change overnight.

1st Prince Shining of the Fold Kingdom was afraid of what Dulandal would do. He forgot that he had a strong ally in the Overgeared Kingdom and was afraid that the Fold Kingdom would be destroyed by the empire. Prince Shining's hands shook.

“Stay back,” Prince Lord said while grabbing him. Then something interesting happened. Prince Shining suddenly became calm. Prince Lord's gentle voice melted the anxiety and fear in Prince Shining's eyes, while Lord's small and warm touch gave him courage.

“No. I will protect you.” Prince Shining held Lord's hand and gritted his teeth. He didn't flee from Prince Dulandal and kept to Lord's side. “I am 1st Prince Shining of the Fold Kingdom. I am honored to greet a great imperial prince of the empire.”

“Hoh...” Dulandal was puzzled by Prince Shining's polite and dignified attitude. What type of royalty could be so proud before an imperial prince? It was amazing and disgusting that no fear could be sensed in Prince Shining's eyes. Still, Dulandal wouldn't be an imperial prince if he expressed such discomfort.

Dulandal smiled and patted Prince Shining's shoulder. He pressured Prince Shining using political reality, rather than personal feelings. “Didn't the Fold Kingdom declare that it would no longer rely on our empire?”

“Yes... How can a small and poor kingdom like ours rely on the empire? There is no value in the Saharan Empire protecting our small kingdom while consuming its resources. Father thought he could no longer bring anything to the empire and was forced to become independent..”

“It doesn't consume a lot of resources to take care of a small kingdom.”

“ ... ”

“Independence is a matter for the emperor to decide, not you.”

“...”

“His Majesty’s wrath is very large. I am wondering if the Fold Kingdom has forgotten the grace of the empire.”

“That... How can that be? We can never forget the grace that the empire has shown us...” Prince Shining paled again. His voice and his body started shaking.

The Fold Kingdom had been built on a desolate land, and the king’s will to reclaim the wasteland and feed all the people couldn’t be achieved. This was all due to the empire!

The Saharan Empire, which had the power to trample on the Fold Kingdom at any time, had demanded massive tributes from the Fold Kingdom for 200 years, preventing the Fold Kingdom from developing. This was despite the fact that the persecuted people couldn’t afford to give the tributes.

That’s right. For the past 200 years, the Fold Kingdom had been collapsing slowly and steadily. Resistance? It was useless. Several kings and countless officials who tried rebelling against the empire had been killed for the outrageous crime of ‘treachery.’ The Fold Kingdom was thoroughly helpless and continued to build up anger and fear toward the empire.

This fear was completely manifested in Prince Shining. The moment that Dulandal brought up the emperor, Shining seemed to become smaller and his eyes darkened. He was worried this would be the end of the Fold Dynasty. Then Lord grabbed his collar, and Shining once again overcame the fear. He regained stability in his heart, and his courage grew again. Shining felt a warm aura wrap around his body and came to know clearly that this was a blessing!

‘This young child has divine power...?’

Lord smiled brightly at the confused Shining. “Pope Damian taught me.”

“...?”

The pope taught the prince of a country? It was ridiculous. Prince Shining thought that Lord's words were too absurd, but he didn't doubt Lord. He simply interpreted it as a child's misunderstanding.

On the other hand, Dulandal felt something strange.

‘What?’

This was already the second time. Did this person introduce himself as Shining? The prince whose name Dulandal would forget tomorrow was being influenced by something.

‘Is it an artifact?’

Red flames glowed in the middle of Dulandal's black eyes. It was the appearance of the ‘red energy’ that only flowed in the empire's royal bloodline. Dulandal was amazed as he observed Shining with red eyes. Yet it wasn't Shining whom he was surprised by. It was the little boy standing by Shining's side.

‘What is this divine power?’

‘All beings apart from me are evil.’ This was what the divine power felt from Lord seemed to be saying. If this child kept training in divine power, in 10 years, he would gain a divine power that even transcended Pope Damian's.

‘Is he really the child of the Overgeared King?’

It was understandable if he had the talent for blacksmithing, but divine power...?

‘A mutation appeared when he was born.’

Why had the Overgeared King sent a little boy to the pope's celebration? Dulandal was now able to solve this question.

‘His son was born with a high divine power, so he thinks it is better to send him to the Vatican early on.’

Lord was lacking talent as an Overgeared Prince, but he was worthy for the Vatican. It was clear that the Overgeared King showed his son to the pope and elders in advance in order to leave him in the Vatican one day.

‘It will definitely greatly benefit the country if a bond with the Vatican is formed...’

Wasn’t this why the empire supported Pascal in the past? Dulandal grasped the Overgeared King’s intentions and honestly admired them.

‘Even using his young son as a political tool... As expected from the Overgeared King. He is the adversary that His Majesty acknowledges.’

A smile appeared on Dulandal’s face as he thought about the Overgeared King that His Majesty the Emperor acknowledged.

“Hello, Your Highness. I am Lord, the son of the Overgeared King.” Lord smiled and bowed to Prince Dulandal. He was a six-year-old. It was hard to think that a child with such pure and innocent expressions would be an enemy in the future. Right now, Lord was just cute and adorable.

“Hum hum.” Dulandal was dazzled by Lord’s charm and coughed when he belatedly regained his spirit. He struggled to make a serious face and spoke sternly, “It is nice to meet you. I have heard about your father’s reputation...”

Dulandal didn’t finish his greeting though. It was because the knights escorting Dulandal suddenly pulled out their swords.

“What?”

The inside of the hall became chaotic. People were filled with confusion at the sight of swords being drawn. The paladins came rushing, and Prince Shining embraced Lord. Coke, who was guarding Irene, ran over and shouted, “What are you doing?”

He felt a bitter hostility toward the Red Knights who drew their

swords in front of Lord. Coke misunderstood that they were trying to harm the Overgeared Prince. However, Royman had a different interpretation of the scene. She glared at the shadow that Lord was stepping on. ‘King of Shadows—this man...!’

Kasim, the person hiding in Lord’s shadow, suddenly shot a killing intent at the imperial prince, and the knights reacted to it.

‘For you to cause this situation...’

It was an urgent atmosphere.

“His Holiness, Pope Damian is entering!”

The main character of the celebration had shown up. Damian pretended not to know about the commotion in the hall and changed the topic itself. It was to protect Lord from being in a disadvantageous situation.

“Ick...!” Although the imperial prince might’ve been threatened, that did not mean the Red Knights could act freely. The Red Knights were furious but couldn’t say anything. Even a solo number knight couldn’t go against the pope easily. In particular, they couldn’t act freely in this sacred place.

“Your Holiness!” Prince Dulandal came forward directly, shouting to Damian in a voice like he was giving a speech. “A rodent seems to be hiding. Shouldn’t we find the rodent for the sake of Your Holiness and all of our safety?”

“...”

Lord and Chucksley made embarrassed expressions, while Kasim in the shadows regretted his mistake.

On the other hand, someone on the ceiling of the banquet hall was amazed.

‘How did he know?’

It was Yatan's Fourth Servant, Silvenas. As a darkness type demonkin, she could fully assimilate with the darkness and

become darkness itself. When it came to stealth, she was confident that she was comparable to the legendary assassin, Lantier. Yet she had been caught.

‘Their skills... are better than expected?’

No, she hadn’t been discovered yet, but her position would be exposed if she moved in a panic now. So, Silvenas stayed still and gulped.

Chapter 863

“A rodent seems to be hiding. Shouldn’t we find the rodent for the sake of Your Holiness and all of our safety?”

Chatter chatter!

Dulandal’s cry filled the banquet hall and caused numerous people to question it. A rodent? The royal family of other nations failed to read Kasim’s killing intent from the shadows and couldn’t understand the meaning of Dulandal’s words. Consequently, they thought the imperial prince was making a fuss about nothing. They believed that capricious people always acted selfishly to relieve their boredom.

‘This is bad.’

On the other hand, the Overgeared Knights sensed a big crisis. The Red Knights had picked up Kasim’s killing intent from the shadow, so what could they do to defend Kasim and Prince Lord? The Overgeared Knights were tense. Meanwhile, Kasim lamented, ‘Prince Lord is in a difficult position because of me...!’

Past memories unfolded in Kasim’s mind as he stared with bloodshot eyes.

There had been a small village deep in the mountains. It was the village where the Nero Clan lived. The people in the Nero Clan were gentle and not greedy, and they never antagonized each other. The villagers there spent every precious and peaceful day with their families.

However, this happiness was short-lived, ending when the empire’s army came to the village.

Prince Dulandal had arrived with dozens of Red Knights and hundreds of soldiers. “With your skin that’s darker than night and your long arms... all of you are hard to look at. The empire won’t allow you to have territory and religion. Housing and clothes are

also forbidden. You are beasts. If you want to live, you will have to be livestock. If you don't want to be livestock, leave your skin here. Don't argue. Beasts shouldn't use human language."

Kasim couldn't forget any of these brutal words. For the young Kasim who was unfamiliar with the world, it was the first time he had been treated this way and he was shocked. Beasts! They were called beasts! From decent humans, they had become beasts!

This was the first time Kasim felt angry since the day he was born. It was an enormous resentment that destroyed the natural temperament of the Nero. Naturally, it wasn't just Kasim. Thousands of Nero were outraged by the empire that denied their existence. They fought against the empire that was trying to take away their lives, but they were powerless. The Nero had excellent physical abilities, yet they were just babies in front of the well-trained empire's knights and soldiers. The Nero were annihilated, and Kasim was the only survivor.

"..."

It was a curse called survival. Kasim felt a complicated sense of revenge that only desired the fall of the empire. Between the boy who had forgotten the awful reality and the person who served Lord, he couldn't determine reasonably as to how he should act.

Prince Dulandal seemed to urge Kasim on, "A rodent is no different from an ownerless dog. I won't hold anyone here responsible for hiding the rodent."

'I don't know who you are, but don't you harbor a terrible killing intent toward me? Come out. If you stand in front of me right now, your little prince will be safe.' This was what Dulandal was implying.

He also cared about the relationship between the empire and the Overgeared Kingdom. It was a burden for Prince Dulandal to break the truce that the emperor made himself, but he would be satisfied with hunting the rodent. His intentions were read by the

Overgeared Knights.

“...” Chucksley glanced at Lord’s shadow. It was a signal to take responsibility. Chucksley was sad because he knew that Kasim was a valuable talent for the Overgeared Kingdom. However, talent existed for the sake of the kingdom. The talent couldn’t put the kingdom in an inconvenient position. Chucksley’s will was clearly communicated to Kasim’s heart.

‘Yes.’ Kasim’s shaking eyes gradually calmed down. His red eyes became white again. Kasim took a deep breath and soothed his mind. Once the Overgeared Kingdom developed safely and the genius Lord completed his growth, the Overgeared Kingdom would wipe out the empire.

‘If I can’t achieve revenge directly with my own hands, then I have to leave it to others. Yes, let’s die.’ Kasim would leave the destruction of the empire to the Overgeared King and his son, while he would take responsibility for his actions today. ‘I was the one who made the mistake. It is right that I take responsibility for it,’ Kasim pledged and was about to leave the shadows.

At this time, someone spoke to Kasim, “Stay still.”

Lord? No. Before Lord could broach the subject, someone else stepped forward. She was Queen Irene.

“Hoh...?”

The woman standing alone in a corner of the banquet hall, who seemed to have nothing to do with politics, was stepping forward at the critical moment? Prince Dulandal lowered his hostility. He was very interested in the courage and wisdom the woman who caught his eyes would show.

‘Things are becoming more serious.’

The special privilege of the strong was to be ‘leisurely.’ In the midst of this serious situation where someone was worried about their nation and someone else was willing to give up his life,

Dulandal was pleased. Irene stared straight into his eyes and said, “Your Highness, this person isn’t a rodent or a dog. He is Prince Lord’s legitimate escort and a precious talent of our Overgeared Kingdom.”

“Hah?” It was completely different from Dulandal’s expectations.

‘This stupid woman.’

Dulandal frowned and narrowed his eyes. “In other words, Your Majesty wants to claim that Prince Lord’s escort tried to hurt me? The end result is that the Overgeared Kingdom tried to harm the empire’s 2nd prince, meaning the Overgeared Kingdom is hostile to the empire? Then they are also ignoring the truce agreement.”

“No. Think about why your escort knights pulled out their swords. Wasn’t it to defend Your Highness?”

“...Hrmm? That’s right.”

“The same is true for Prince Lord’s escort. As a knight who grew up beside the little prince, he acted in his position of an escort when your knights approached.”

“Is emitting killing intent part of the role of an escort?”

“Isn’t killing intent less dangerous than pulling out swords?”

“Hah...?” Dulandal was hit in the head. By admitting that the Red Knights had drawn their swords to protect him, Dulandal legitimized the actions of the rodent who dared to send killing intent at him. This was absurd and embarrassing. He was angry, but he quickly suppressed this anger. Dulandal’s expression distorted, and he burst out laughing. Then he reached out to Irene with a polite attitude. “I admire Your Majesty’s intelligence. Can you please let me touch your white hand as an apology?”

“It is an honor.”

Was there anyone in the world who could refuse the formal gesture of an imperial prince? In the first place, there was no

reason to refuse it. Irene readily stretched out her soft hand, and Dulandal kissed it.

“...” Lord’s clear eyes turned fierce with a sharpness that resembled his father’s. This was because Lord saw the desire which filled the imperial prince’s eyes when he gazed at Irene.

‘What?’ The Red Knights protecting the imperial prince were shocked. They wanted the intense pressure that they felt from the young prince, who was only around six years old, to be an illusion or a dream. Damian’s heart became restless as he watched the situation progress.

‘Things are better thanks to Queen Irene but...’

Could it become dangerous again now? Damian judged that Lord might make things worse and was about to step forward.

Flash!

Then all of a sudden, the banquet hall was filled with light. It was a nasty light which made it impossible for people to open their eyes, completely different from the warm light that symbolized Goddess Rebecca. Damian recognized this flash of light. While he was temporarily blinded, he shouted, “Black magic! Paladins, immediately escort the imperial prince and royalty!! Kuk...!”

Damian didn’t finish his shout as he’d stepped onto a red pentagram, which had been drawn on the floor, and was now cursed.

[Part of the will of God Yatan has cut you off from the world.]

[You can’t take any action inside this dark barrier.]

[The barrier can only be destroyed from the outside.]

‘The will of Yatan?’ Damian raised his head as he belatedly overcame his blindness. A demonkin fell from the ceiling. The being surrounded by darkness was called Silvenas, who was one of Yatan’s Servants.

“Silva did it! I neutralized the pope!” Her shout was the signal. All types of sounds were heard from outside the banquet hall, and an explosion sent the door of the hall flying open. Dust filled the inside of the banquet hall, and the royalty who barely overcame their blindness were immediately confused.

“Punish the dogs of the damned goddess!”

“The curse of God Yatan is waiting for you!”

The black magicians who entered the banquet hall shouted loudly. The knights of the various nations raised their swords to defend their masters, and the elders of the Rebecca Church and the paladins quickly prepared to fight. Meanwhile, the Overgeared Knights fled with Lord and Irene into a corner. Five new people followed the black magicians into the banquet hall. Three of them were NPCs and two were players.

The big shots were gathered together:

Yatan’s Third Servant, Aliburn...

Yatan’s Sixth Servant, Cardiora...

Yatan’s Seventh Servant, Hill...

The 1st ranked black magician and Yatan’s Eighth Servant, Rose...

And finally...

“Agnus...!!”

Baal’s Contractor. The players who attended this banquet, like Coke, were shocked. They didn’t know about Yatan’s Servants, but they were overwhelmed by Agnus’ presence...

‘There are four of them, including Silvenas?’ Damian, who was trapped inside the barrier, was wary of Yatan’s Servants apart from Agnus. Rebecca’s Daughters pulled out their divine artifacts and ran to Damian’s side.

“....!!!” Damian shouted from inside the barrier but he couldn’t

be heard. Isabel decided that the first pressing need was to destroy this barrier.

“Kuk...!” She stabbed at the barrier with Lifael’s Spear, but there was no change. Far from being destroyed, it didn’t budge at all. Physical force and divine power were unable to harm the barrier.

“Leave the barrier to us and protect the people!”

“In particular, protect Prince Lord!”

The elders came forward. Their instructions reassured Damian. Damian felt a great affinity at the thought of these stuffy old people. However, it wasn’t a situation where he could feel reassured.

“Kyaaaak!”

“Kuaack!”

The screams of the guests started to fill the banquet hall. The knights and paladins who ran over to the situation seemed to be stuck outside. Agnus’ undead seemed to be interfering with them. Isabel also noticed this fact. First of all, she rushed to Prince Lord’s side. After confirming his safety, she turned toward Agnus.

“Kik! Kikikik!”

The screams of the other nations’ royal families and the creepy laughter filled their ears. The confusion in the banquet hall reached an extreme.

“It is okay. It is okay.”

There was a woman who had been captured as a virgin and almost sacrificed to Yatan. It was Irene. From the moment the Yatan Church showed up, she was frightened by her old memories, but she tried not to express it. In order to prevent her son from feeling uneasy, she held her young son in her arms and smiled.

“...Mother.” Lord felt his mother’s trembling and her love. The child’s gaze turned toward the battlefield. He was filled with a

desire to fight.

“You can’t. You aren’t their opponent right now.”

“That’s right, Your Highness. Please stay back.” Kasim, Chucksley, and the young knights came forward.

Chapter 864

[★Hidden Quest★ The Vatican's Crisis has occurred.]

[The history of the continent will change depending on the result of the story.]

[The privilege of witnessing the ★Hidden Quest★ The Vatican's Crisis has increased all stats by 2. Movement speed is permanently increased by 1%. You can sell your story at an expensive price to the bards drifting around the continent.]

[★Hidden Quest★ Escape from Death is in progress.]

[Escape from Death]

[★ Hidden Quest ★

It is your responsibility to escort Irene and Lord.

Escape with Irene and Lord from the Vatican, which has become a battlefield after being attacked by the Yatan Church.

Quest Clear Conditions: Escort Irene and Lord safely out of the banquet hall.

Quest Clear Rewards: Irene will never forget your accomplishments. Your reputation in the Overgeared Kingdom will rise sharply. The Overgeared Kingdom is a nation founded and ruled by the player 'Grid.' The precise compensation can't be predicted.

Quest Failure: Disqualified from being an Overgeared Knight. Expelled from the Overgeared Kingdom. Level -5.

※ Sub Quest (1) ※

Kill 150 black magicians (0/150)

Sub Quest Reward: Strength +10

* The average level of players currently in the Vatican is 301. The level of the Yatan Church's black magicians is set at 275.

※ Sub Quest (2) ※

Survive when health has fallen below 10%.

Sub Quest Reward: Stamina +20

※ Sub Quest (3) ※

Keep the health of the escort target Irene at 100%.

Sub Quest Reward: The title 'Protector' is obtained.]

“Cough...”

An urgent situation had suddenly occurred, and a hidden quest was triggered. The considerable compensation was worth looking forward to, but Coke wasn't happy at all. His facial expression distorted.

‘How can I break through?’

Coke had to escape with Irene and Lord. This thought wasn't just due to the quest. It was his duty as a knight.

‘First of all, I can't go against Yatan's Servants.’

The Yatan Church was a group that could fight against the Rebecca Church, the largest religion on the continent. It was easy to guess the strength of the named NPCs representing the Yatan Church, and Coke didn't have the power to break through them as a third advancement player.

‘In the end, I have to break through either Rose or Agnus...’

It was a terrible predicament. Coke might be the peak of the new generation of rookies, but he wasn't first in his class rankings. Rose's and Agnus' talents in their respective fields were at least equal to Coke's, and their levels were also higher than Coke's. Above all, there was a gap that couldn't be narrowed by items.

Agnus and Rose had been playing the game since the beginning. Coke assumed that the quests and boss monsters they had cleared were extremely valuable. This made him think that both Rose and

Agnus had a higher level than him and that his items and skills were also inferior.

‘I can’t stand by idly.’ Coke drew his sword and waited for orders from his superiors.

He knew his precise role in this event that had suddenly occurred. It was a supporting role. The faces of the other actors on stage were too brilliant for him to be mistaken as a lead actor. The supporting role only followed the thoughts and judgment of the actors.

Chucksley and Royman were in the middle of a discussion.

“Rebecca’s Daughters will handle Yatan’s Servants. We have to break through the necromancer blocking the right entrance.”

“I was thinking the same thing.”

Chucksley and Royman were apparently targeting Agnus.

Kasim also agreed with them. He came out of the shadows and told Chucksley, “According to the report of my shadow soldiers, an undead army is deployed outside the banquet hall. The paladins and Rebecca’s Daughters candidates can’t enter because of them. The man who controls the undead must be that necromancer.”

“He no longer has the capacity to defend himself if is commanding such a large army,” Chucksley and his companions made this judgment.

On the staircase of the banquet hall, Isabel moved from where she had been trying to break Pope Damian’s barrier and rushed toward Agnus. “Goddess’ Wrath!”

Her judgment was the same as Chucksley’s. Most of the people gathered here analyzed Agnus as the weakest enemy. However, the reality of it wasn’t that clear.

“Kik!” Agnus laughed at one of Rebecca’s Daughters, who were considered invincible.

He raised his sword and defended against Lifael's Spear. Isabel and those present were astonished. It was unbelievable that a necromancer succeeded in defending against an attack from one of Rebecca's Daughters with a sword. Coke and the other players shouted simultaneously:

"He isn't an ordinary necromancer!"

"He is Baal's Contractor!"

"Baal's Contractor...?" Isabel murmured.

Agnus' rusty-looking sword engaged with Lifael's Spear, and divine power started to escape from the spear. It had a curse that could even neutralize divine power? Isabel was convinced of it once she heard that the necromancer before her was Baal's Contractor.

"Dispersed Dream." Rose, the 1st ranked black magician and Yatan's Eighth Servant, used one of her ultimate skills. It was a huge black magic that inflicted 10,000 fixed damage to all targets in sight and cursed targets without black magic with the abnormal conditions of confusion, weakness, and silence.

"Kuk...! Kuaaaaak!" Screams rang out from everywhere. In particular, people with low status resistance fell to their knees. On the other hand, the royalty of the other nations, including Irene and Lord, were safe. All of them were covered by their knights and weren't in Rose's vision.

"It's okay. It's okay," Irene said, but her voice and body trembled as she hugged Lord. She was anxious, yet she tried to make a bright face for her son.

"Mother..." Lord, who felt his mother's anxiety and love at the same time, was filled with a sense of purpose. He had to protect his mother. Coke witnessed Lord jumping up from his position and was shocked.

'I thought he was a smart child!'

Coke had heard many rumors about Lord. Wasn't he a genius among geniuses? Lord had learned assassination from Kasim and farming from Legendary Farmer Piaro, and he studied under High Elf Sticks. There were rumors that he was a genius who would surpass his father. However, he was only a six-year-old child. Even if he could use an assassin's techniques, how well could he fight when his strength, stamina, and agility were lacking? Coke was dumbfounded when Lord rushed toward Yatan's Servants, including Agnus. He thought that Lord was letting his emotions get ahead of his rationality.

'It can't be helped since he is still young. I have to pay more attention to him.'

Coke was filled with a larger tension, while Kasim and Chucksley blocked the road ahead of Lord. No one had to say anything. Kasim and Chucksley supported Isabel, who was struggling with Agnus and Rose. Chucksley attacked Rose and separated her from Isabel, while Kasim emerged from Agnus' shadow and struck Agnus' back with a dagger.

"Kuh! Hat!" It was hard to distinguish if Agnus was screaming or laughing. Still, one thing was clear. Kasim's attack dealt huge damage to Agnus. Apart from Grid, there were no players who could easily handle the attacks of named NPCs over level 400.

Chucksley and Kasim succeeded in pulling Rose and Agnus away from the entrance and shouted at the same time, "Royman!"

"Yes!"

It was now time for the young knights, including Royman and Coke, to take action. They placed Irene and Lord in the center and rushed toward the empty entrance. Rose and Agnus weren't particularly interested in Royman's group though. Their primary goal was the Rebecca Church itself. In fact, the quest they were carrying out required them to get rid of Rebecca's Daughters, Pope Damian, and the paladins. Eliminating them would give Rose and

Agnus great rewards.

However, the other Yatan's Servants were different. The Third Servant, Aliburn shouted, "Don't miss a single person! We must kill all of them and announce the dignity of the Yatan Church!"

Aliburn used black magic. He could burn the mental power and mana of others to use as his own resources. The Rebecca Church's subjects were helpless before him.

"Ah...! Ahhh...!" The Rebecca priests and paladins paled as they lost their mana and couldn't use magic. The thousands of black magicians in the banquet hall started to target the royal family of each nation, including Irene and Lord.

"Dark Vocation..."

"Where are you going?"

The Overgeared Knights were busy. They continuously swung their swords at the warlocks aiming for Irene and Lord.

[You have defeated a black magician of the Yatan Church.]

[2,290,190 experience has been acquired.]

The average level of the black magicians was proportional to the average level of the players present. They weren't particularly strong, so Coke killed them relatively easily. The problem was that there were too many black magicians. The Overgeared Knights killed and killed, but new black magicians kept appearing. The chants of spells being cast were heard all over the place.

In the end, Royman allowed a black magician to cast a spell. The dark flames, shackles, and curses bombarded Royman's group, including Irene and Lord.

"Your Majesty! Prince!"

Coke had to defend them. He didn't think of anything else and embraced Irene and Lord. Receiving the bombardment of black magic spells with his back, Coke's health gauge fell to less than half

in an instant, and he suffered a lot of physical and mental pain.

“Cough!”

“A-Are you okay?” Irene was worried about Coke, who suffered from the curse and coughed up blood. Coke smiled brightly as he suppressed his pain and replied, “I am fine as long as both of you are okay.”

“Sir Coke...”

Blood flowed down his back and hips. Coke was worried about Irene’s troubles increasing and stepped away from her without showing his back. Then he immediately cut down two black magicians and cleared the way.

“Now, let’s go.”

“Yes...” Irene didn’t hesitate. She knew that Coke and the other knights would be in greater danger if she slowed down. “Thank you.”

Coke ignored the pains in his body and started running after Irene when he heard familiar voices in his ears.

“Your Majesty!! Prince Lord!”

“Prince, where are you?”

They were the Rebecca’s Daughter candidates. Lord tried to respond to the cries of those outside the banquet hall, but it was impossible.

“You won’t be able to take one step outside.” Yatan’s Fourth Servant, Silvenas, flew like the wind and blocked Irene and Lord’s way. She let out an ugly laugh as she pulled out a weapon and pointed her other hand at the entrance. Then she shot black magic toward the entrance, sweeping the Rebecca’s Daughter candidates waiting outside into an explosion. Through the smoke, Silvenas’ eyes focused on Irene. “I have been watching you while I was hiding. You are beautiful and speak well. Bah, whatever. Pretty

things are just ugly.”

The courage Irene had garnered from her desire to protect Lord disappeared in a flash. Irene’s body trembled with horror as she confronted the Yatan Servant.

“Hahhh, your terrified face is very good.” Silvenas was ecstatic. Her cheeks flushed red, and she licked her lips with a red tongue that contrasted with her grey hair as she approached Irene.

“Your Majesty!” Coke defeated the black magicians following closely and came just in time. However, Silvenas’ sword moved at a speed that was too fast for Coke. A red energy blade cut Coke’s armor, and he lost a big amount of health.

[You have suffered serious damage!]

[The durability of the Grid Armor Made by a Craftsman has decreased by 47.]

[You have survived with less than 10% of your health.]

[As a result of the subquest reward, the stamina stat has permanently increased by 20.]

“K...uack...! Not yet...!!”

He couldn't die, and his quest couldn't fail. Coke tried to raise his body quickly. He had to somehow protect Irene and Lord until Royman’s group finished off the black magicians and joined him. However, it wasn’t easy. The bleeding status made him dizzy, and Coke eventually fell onto the bloody floor.

Silvenas gazed into Irene’s eyes. “Where do you want me to tear you apart? Huh~?”

Rose, Agnus, and the black magicians were tying up the enemies’ feet, so Silvenas could afford to take her time with Irene and Lord, who were helpless sheep. She was going to enjoy this pleasant situation slowly.

...At least that was until the little prince, whom she had thought

of as a meek lamb, bared his teeth. “Storm Sword.”

“...?!” A storm of sword energy swallowed up Silvenas.

Chapter 865

‘What is this?’

It was an unpredictable attack from Silvenas’ point of view. Who would’ve expected the young prince to swing his sword? No, it wasn’t appropriate to call it just swinging his sword. This was a refined swordsmanship. It was a powerful, fierce, and persistent swordsmanship which cut off the flow of mana in the area!

“Kuk...!” Silvenas was trapped in the unfolding storm of sword energy and became helpless. The dark demonkin’s ‘assimilation with darkness’ and ‘conformity with the wind’ were closely related to the inborn mana circulation of the dark demonkin. The storm interfered with the circulation of mana, and it prevented Silvenas from exercising her full strength and made her lose her speed.

Unfortunately, Lord was young and weak and soon became tired.

“Hiyaaack!” Still, he managed to buy enough time for the Overgeared Knights, including Royman and Coke. The young swordsmen broke through the siege of the black magicians and bombarded Silvenas, who was trapped in the storm. In particular, Royman’s swordsmanship was brilliant. Her unique swordsmanship greatly constricted Silvenas’ behavior by continuing to freeze or knock her down.

“Ugh...!”

The never-ending CC made Silvenas burst with frustration, and she eventually pulled out her hidden card. To be exact, it was an eruption of wings made out of demonic energy. Once her demonic energy exploded, Silvenas entered a super-armored state and resisted all CCs. She regained her swiftness and flew upward before wielding her sword. A red light filled the air and aimed at the Overgeared Knights one by one.

“Avoid it!” Royman cried out urgently as she blocked some of the

sword energy flying through the air. Silvenas' next target was Coke. He was severely injured after having protected Irene and Lord alone while the other knights were tied up with the black magicians. Royman was worried about him. Currently, Coke couldn't defend against Silvenas' attack, and he would die the moment he was hit.

Her judgment was correct.

'This is the end.' Coke's health was only at 5%. His recovery speed from consuming potions couldn't keep up with the rate at which he was being hit by black magic. Thus, Coke humbly accepted death. He had no confidence in blocking Silvenas' attack which the other knights, apart from Royman, couldn't even defend against.

As Silvenas flew through the air, her speed was beyond Coke's perception. The hairs on his body shot up as the demonic energy neared him. Coke felt the hair tickling his nose and told Royman with a bitter smile, "Make sure that the queen and the prince are safe..."

"Sir Coke!" Royman was already using the 'Farmland Walk' that she had learned from Piaro.

She knew that Coke had a blessing which allowed him to revive, but she still didn't want to see a colleague die in front of her. Additionally, she knew that those with the blessing experienced a large penalty when they died. Farmland Walk allowed her to leap half the distance of Blink. Royman repeated the jump and tried to narrow the 13-meter distance between her and Coke.

"Hihit!"

Nonetheless, it was too late. Silvenas had already taken control of the situation behind Coke and was just about to strike him.

[Prince 'Lord' of the Overgeared Kingdom wants to appoint you as his knight.]

[Would you like to accept?]

This notification window popped up in Coke's vision that was flashing red. Coke didn't delay his response. "I will be loyal to Your Highness!"

[You have become the knight of Prince 'Lord' of the Overgeared Kingdom.]

[Lord has summoned you.]

[Would you like to accept the summons?]

It happened in an instant. The moment Silvenas' sword was about to touch Coke's back, Coke responded to Lord's summon and was moved to his side. Confusion filled Silvenas' eyes as she cut empty air. "This is nonsense!"

She ignored Royman who had jumped in front of her as her target was now the young prince who had already interfered with her many times. Silvenas' sword dropped mercilessly toward the young child who was sweating in the aftermath of using the sword technique. Simultaneously...

"Tearing the Sky." Lord used the wooden sword his father had given him and used the counterattack limited to attacks coming from the top. It was one of the sword techniques that Kraugel loved using before he became a Sword Saint. The strength of the master was manifested through the disciple. It was like looking at the claws of a giant beast. The sword energy cut Silvenas' body and the banquet hall continuously.

"Cough!" Silvenas suffered a serious injury for the first time, and blood flowed from her mouth. Tearing the Sky returned the attacker's technique to them and was completely different from Storm Sword, which dealt damage in proportion to the user's attack power. Lord could do great damage to Silvenas even if he was only level 60.

"Kuoh... Ugh..! You...! This little guy!!" Silvenas' health gauge

fell by one-tenth, and she lost her temper. It insulted her that she was disgraced by a little boy while the Vatican's dogs, the royal families, and thousands of black magicians were watching. Silvenas had never experienced such great shame since she was born. In the end...

“Die...! Killing power!!” Silvenas threw off her mask of beauty and revealed the appearance of the dark demonkin that was ridiculed as the ugliest species in hell.

“Hiik!”

“W-What is going on?”

Her skin was peeled and twisted like it had been burned, and her eyes, nose, and mouth were jumbled together. Silvenas' ugly appearance gave a huge shock to everyone in the banquet hall. Even the Yatan believers were either shocked, dismayed, or disappointed by Silvenas' appearance. On one side of the banquet hall, Yatan's Sixth Servant Cardiora displayed a meaningful smile. “Now, no one can survive.”

It wasn't an exaggeration. Silvenas exposing her ugly appearance meant she would kill everyone around her—enemies, allies... everyone!

“Kieek! Kieeeeeek!” Silvenas' shriek inflicted great pain onto everyone in the banquet hall. The dark demonkin's scream, which lamented their ugliness, made listeners feel uncomfortable and disturbed while also interfering with mana flow and damaging their hearing. It was dangerous! There might be no physical damage, but ordinary people like Irene couldn't endure it.

“Your Majesty!” Chucksley immediately noticed this and tried to run to protect her.

“Where are you going?” Unfortunately, Rose didn't let him go. She blocked Chucksley using the magic accumulated in Belial's Staff (Myth Reproduction) that she had gained in exchange for the

32nd Great Demon Belial summoning episode.

“This is a mess...!” Chucksley cried out as he fell. He blamed himself for being unable to do anything while Queen Irene was in danger. In fact, there was no reason to blame himself. The fact that he could face Yatan’s Eighth Servant for a while was already sufficient. The same was true for Isabel and Kasim. They were doing a tremendous job.

“Kikikik!” Baal’s Contractor Agnus recalled all the undead he had summoned outside the banquet hall. Agnus couldn’t cope with Isabel and Kasim alone, so he brought the death knight and demons to his side to defend himself. There was a difference in strength. Baal’s Contractor might be hostile to humanity, but he had a clear limit to his abilities as a player.

What if Baal’s Contractor was an NPC? He would be able to threaten everyone in the Vatican simultaneously, instead of just Isabel and Kasim. As a player, Agnus had all types of restrictions until a number of class quests were cleared.

“Shadow Soldiers!” Kasim raised his shadow soldiers from various places and concentrated the offensive on Agnus. Meanwhile, Isabel stabbed her spear in this gap and killed a demon.

“Kik...! Kikikik! More! More! More! Moreee! Kuhahahahat!” Agnus’ madness was getting out of control. To him, this was a sweet dream that made the terrible reality disappear.

“Your Holiness!”

“Prince Lord!”

“Imperial Prince!”

Agnus recalled the undead, allowing the paladins, Rebecca’s Daughter candidates, and soldiers from many countries to enter the banquet hall. They started to dispose of the Yatan Church’s black magicians and gave hope to Damian and the royalty of the

other kingdoms.

However, this hope was short-lived.

“There are more small-fries.” The Third Servant, Aliburn, started to act. Aliburn burned the mana of the priests and paladins and jumped into the front lines. The mana he stole from others was converted to magic, and he was like a weapon made for the purpose of killing as he shot black magic everywhere. Dozens of priests and paladins lost their lives in a flash, while several Rebecca’s Daughter candidates turned to gray pillars of ash.

“Lea! Anne!!” Lord was in despair after losing his precious girlfriends. He wanted to run toward Aliburn but couldn’t. By now, he was already exhausted, yet Silvenas was threatening his mother. The first thing he had to do was protect his mother.

“Kiyaaaaah!” Silvenas’ screams grew louder.

“Uh...!” Irene stumbled from the pain. Lord supported her with his small body while Coke blocked her ears with bloody hands, despite him also bleeding from the ears.

“This can’t continue!”

“Shit!” Irene was Kasim’s top priority. He no longer clung to Agnus and switched targets to Silvenas. Thanks to this, Agnus regained his freedom and was able to breathe. Then he belatedly discovered Irene and Lord. “Huh?”

Were they Grid’s wife and son, whom he had seen on the news previously? Yes, they were Grid’s precious people. Agnus frowned. There was a certain memory he wanted to forget. However, the unforgettable memories stirred his mind. The sight of the woman he loved being abused by angry men...

“...That jerk, Grid.”

Unlike how Agnus was previously helpless, Grid was currently brimming with strength. So why was he neglecting those precious to him? Would he only realize their importance after losing them?

Agnus' wrath shot upward. Then Agnus' eyes widened, and he summoned the trump card he had been saving—Lich Mumud.

His magic power struck Silvenas, who was floating above Irene's and Lord's heads.

“Agnus! What are you doing right now?” The puzzled Rose shouted.

“Kik? So what? Is it normal to hurt a weak woman?” Agnus abandoned the ‘Vatican Invasion’ quest that was in progress.

“You dog-like bastard... I want to rip you apart.”

“You are crazy!!”

Overwhelmed by the repeated explosions, the ceiling of the banquet hall started to collapse. Agnus flew toward Irene and Lord.

Simultaneously, in the capital of the Overgeared Kingdom...

“Quickly!” Grid urged Sage Sticks. Having received a whisper from Coke a few minutes ago, Grid wanted to fly to the Vatican immediately. However, things weren't so simple.

“Just a bit more...” Due to the academy lessons, Sticks had consumed a large amount of mana and was lacking mana. In order for him to be able to use Mass Teleport, Sticks had to use Mana Drain for 5 minutes while also taking mana potions. For Grid, these five minutes felt like 10 years—no, 100 years.

Chapter 866

[★Hidden Quest★ ‘Vatican Invasion’ has been abandoned.]

[Affinity with the Yatan Church has decreased by 100.]

[The relationship with the Yatan Church has changed from friendly to wary.]

The Vatican Invasion was a hidden quest with huge rewards, and the clear probability of a story unfolding from it was very high. Yet Agnus was now abandoning the honeypot that he had been certain to win. It was a craziness that no one could understand.

“You are crazy!!” Rose screamed. It was already too late to stop Agnus. Lich Mumud attacked Silvenas, while Agnus flew through the gap and reached Irene.

“Agnus...!”

He was the man who was called a mad dog. Coke was frightened when the man everyone called crazy approached the queen and prince. He didn’t know that Agnus had stopped Silvenas’ scream and squeezed his sword with trembling hands. The sight of a weak person determined to defend someone caused Agnus’ eyes to flash with emotion.

Recalling his past helpless self who hadn’t been able to protect the woman he loved, Agnus felt regret, anger, resentment, and sadness. Agnus’ face distorted in a terrible manner as he hated his past self. It was a face that induced sympathy rather than fear.

“Who are you?” The little prince asked. He was aware of the sad face of the man who was protecting him and his mother.

Agnus barely suppressed his anger and replied, “Just a fool.”

“...”

He was obsessed with the past that couldn’t be reversed and was forming new regrets at this moment. Wasn’t he a fool? That’s

right. Agnus was clearly aware that it was wrong for him to give up the hidden quest just for old memories. He knew he was going to regret it.

In fact, Yatan's Third Servant Aliburn was threatening him right now.

"Baal's Contractor...!! Have you forgotten the grace we showed you by giving you the Stone of Life? You will regret this!" Aliburn was furious, misunderstanding why Baal's Contractor was trying to betray the Yatan Church. "It is always Baal's Contractor...! You always pester us!!"

The Yatan Church served the evil god, Yatan, and the great demons were Yatan's children. Originally, the 1st Great Demon Baal was the second highest subject of respect for Yatan's Servants. However, Baal had an incomprehensible side. Hundreds of years ago, he contracted with the legendary Pagma and gave him a mighty force, interfering with the descent of the great demons. It was on a mere whim, but Aliburn was forced to doubt Baal's intentions when his contractor betrayed the Yatan Church.

"Baal wants to betray God Yatan!" Aliburn knew that there was no limit to the desires of a great demon, so he interpreted it as the 1st Great Demon Baal wanting to pull down God Yatan and become a god.

Agnus laughed. "That jerk's intentions aren't important."

"What? You..?"

"I am me. Do you think I will act for others? Kik!" Agnus didn't care if this was the wrong move. He pointed to Coke and Irene. "I want to save these people. That is the desire in my heart."

He was like a heaven-sent savior to Irene and Lord, but Coke was still vigilant toward him. Watching Agnus, Aliburn became speechless. Then he made a blatant threat, "Someday, you won't be able to protect them with your present strength. You will surely

be defeated, and they will die.”

“ ... ”

“Then you will have the Stone of Life stolen from you.”

This was Agnus’ last chance.

“Now, wake up and change your mind.” Aliburn reached out to Agnus.

A notification window asking if he wanted to accept the Vatican Invasion hidden quest once again appeared in front of Agnus, and once again, the rewards for the hidden quest were amazing. He would be able to secure a large amount of demonic power, intelligence, dominance and also gain a 50% resistance to divine attacks. There were quest rewards which maximized the strengths of Baal’s Contractor while overcoming the weaknesses.

It was a temptation that couldn’t be refused unless the person was a fool... and Agnus was a fool.

“I am still going to fight. Kik!”

Agnus’ desires were different from ordinary people, and he didn’t want strength, power, or wealth. He just wanted to recover the past. That’s why it was impossible for him to turn a blind eye to this scene due to his regrets of the past, even if new regrets rose.

[★Hidden Quest★ ‘Vatican Invasion’ has been rejected.]

[Yatan’s Third Servant Aliburn is extremely angry.]

[The relationship with the Yatan Church has changed from wary to hostile.]

[The hidden class quest ‘Will of the Former Generation’ has been opened!]

[Will of the Former Generation]

[Difficulty: Class quest.

You have become hostile to the Yatan Church. This means you

will be hostile to God Yatan and all great demons.

You have chosen the same path as the former Baal's Contractor, Pagma.

Go to the Hall of Fame!

Understand Pagma's will!

Glimpse the will and power that he left behind and prepare to fight against the great demons!

Quest Clear Conditions: Clear the events that will occur in the Hall of Fame.

Quest Clear Rewards: Baal's Contractor will acquire some of the power left by Pagma.

Quest Failure: The rewards will be permanently deleted.]

He ended up being connected with Pagma? The new development interested Agnus. One of the Five Miracles once again broke Morpheus' predictions.

"Kik?" Agnus burst out laughing.

"Yes! Baal's Contractor is like this!" Aliburn roared. His magic power that had been built up by absorbing divine power stirred the ground. However, Agnus wasn't afraid to confront it.

"Summon! Death Knight!"

Lich Mumud tied up Silvenas' feet while the death knights rose from the ground.

"Furfu's Power!"

A white light covered the stormy night sky. It was a scene where the pouring rain turned to ice. This was the power of Great Demon Furfu. His power was manifested through Agnus' hands and strengthened all of Agnus' servants, from the demons to the death knights and Lich Mumud. Silvenas was trying to keep up with Lich Mumud's iridescent magic when she suddenly screamed,

“Kyaaaak!”

The strengthened Lich Mumud alone threatened Yatan’s Fourth Servant. Once Agnus crossed the irreversible river, Aliburn’s eyes turned red. “You...!”

Aliburn’s infinite pride as the best black magician of the continent was destroyed.

“The unclean darkness will spread, and the sky and earth will be corrupted!!”

The sky, which had turned white due to Furfu’s Power, darkened once again, and the heavy rain pouring down was invisible. All types of curses flew out while the people present trembled in terror.

“Do as you please!” At this moment, the elders devoted to breaking the barrier containing Pope Damian unleashed Goddess’ Purification. The elders had high dark resistance and weren’t affected by Aliburn’s Mana Burn. The divine light created by the 13 of them cleaned the polluted sky and earth in an instant.

“It will be dangerous if I don’t go out directly.” The silent 2nd Prince of the Saharan Empire manifested his red energy. His sword was wrapped in red energy and destroyed dozens of black magicians at once.

“What?” The eyes of Yatan’s Sixth Servant Cardiora widened as she engaged with the solo number knights who escorted the imperial prince. She couldn’t have imagined that the imperial prince, who grew up in a greenhouse, would have such great power concealed. It wasn’t just Cardiora. Kasim, who was flying to defeat Aliburn, and everyone else in the banquet hall was surprised by Dulandal.

‘This cursed strength!’

Naturally, Kasim knew about the power of the royal family. Indeed, he couldn’t forget the red energy that wiped out his clan.

Silvenas was caught by Agnus, and Rose was facing Chucksley and Isabel. Aliburn was fighting the elders and other Rebecca's Daughters, and Cardiora was facing the Red Knights and Dulandal. Meanwhile, the black magicians were holding back the knights of other kingdoms and the Rebecca's Daughter candidates.

Agnus' betrayal and Dulandal's power were unexpected variables for the Yatan Church, and the situation was going badly for the Yatan Church.

'There is hope!' The royalty, who had fairly high insight, were filled with expectations.

They believed that if they cooperated actively, they would be able to overcome this crisis and survive. With this in mind, they led the knights to kill the black magicians quickly. However, Yatan's Seventh Servant Hill reversed the situation again. Everyone became desperate as the fat middle-aged man showed up from wherever he had been hiding since the beginning of the battle.

"Hehe! Kihehe! Aliburn! I have succeeded!" The laughing Hill was holding a sword that was stuck in a piece of rock. The trapped Pope Damian, the elders, and Rebecca's Daughters were all astonished. It couldn't be helped since the Holy Sword which had been given to the first pope by Goddess Rebecca was now in the hands of the Yatan Church.

Damian was forced to proceed with a new quest.

[Recapture the Holy Sword]

[The Sealed Holy Sword, which the goddess gave to the first pope, has fallen into the hands of the Yatan Church!]

The Holy Sword is the symbol of Rebecca and proof of the pope!

You must retrieve it!

Quest Clear Conditions: Take back the Sealed Holy Sword.

Quest Clear Reward: Goddess Rebecca's blessing. Affinity with

the elders will reach the peak and you will be respected by all believers.

Quest Failure: Many believers will be disillusioned with the ineffective church leadership and will leave the church. You won't be eligible to serve as the pope. Goddess Rebecca will be disappointed in you. Level -5.]

No, what could he do when locked up in this barrier? In the midst of this crisis, Damian prayed for salvation. However, Goddess Rebecca was silent.

“Ugh...!” Despite his anxiety, Damian's gaze kept following Isabel and Irene. He hoped that the woman he loved and the people precious to him would all be safe. How long could they continue enduring this? As Aliburn started cursing the Holy Sword, the Rebecca priests, paladins, elders, and daughters started to lose their divine power.

Chapter 867

The righteous heroes had been attracted by hymns and set up statues and temples for the goddess. The heroes had raised the saint, who became a pope and then a hero. This was the legendary history—the birth of the Rebecca Church. The Holy Sword was the first emergence of the goddess' will. It was the symbol of the pope and the pride of the church.

At the end of the Dark War, the sword was inserted into a rock and couldn't function at all. However, the symbolic significance of the sword was still intact, and its value couldn't be determined. At least, this was the case in the eyes of the Rebecca Church.

‘Our precious treasure ended up in the hands of the Yatan Church!’

From the elders to the priests, the Rebecca believers were forced to become agitated. Their sacred treasure wasn't allowed to outsiders, yet it was being taken by a dirty Yatan Servant? This was an unbelievable sight.

[The Sword Stuck in the Rock has fallen into the hands of the Yatan Church!]

[The morale of the Rebecca Church has decreased drastically.]

[The defense and magic resistance of the Rebecca members have been reduced by 60%.]

[The pope has a duty to lead the members. The pope's morale is unaffected.]

[The Sword Stuck in the Rock has been contaminated with Yatan's essence! The weakened divine power remaining in the Holy Sword has been extinguished slightly!]

[The Rebecca Church members will be confused for 10 seconds. No actions can be taken.]

[The pope has a duty to lead the members. You won't become confused.]

Damian resisted the confusion with the power of the system, but his mental state wasn't normal.

“What is this...?” Damian panicked at the arrival of the worst situation he had never imagined to come about. He was trapped in a dark barrier, and his confusion was maximized because he didn't know what to do.

‘Isn't it an impossible quest to clear?’

Damian was currently fully restrained. He was completely cut off from the outside world by the barrier and was unable to act. Despite the entire Rebecca Church being in a crisis, he couldn't do anything.

‘Let's think. Think about it, Damian!’

As an otaku, Damian enjoyed countless movies, animations, and manhwas, and he had come across countless fantastic and interesting stories. So, he was now contemplating Satisfy's worldview from a reader's perspective.

‘It doesn't make sense that the Rebecca Church will collapse. In a time when wicked people all over the world, including the Yatan Church, are trying to resurrect the great demons, the balance of the world will collapse once the Rebecca Church is destroyed.’

In short, it would be hell. It would be a world with no dreams or hope. On the day of Satisfy's release, Chairman Lim Cheolho had expressed his desire to make a world where players could achieve their dreams and feel a sense of fulfillment that couldn't be felt in reality. How could he have planned for this dystopia?

‘It isn't possible. It is against the will of the world for the Rebecca Church to fall.’

Damian's body trembled with conviction. At this moment, he realized how big a burden was being placed on him. An enormous

pressure weighed down on his mind and heart.

‘The fate of the world is left to one person!’

The destruction of the Rebecca Church meant the end of the world, yet he was the only one who could stop the destruction. Damian obviously felt a great burden. If his spirit was at the level of ordinary people, then his mind would’ve blanked out due to the great pressure. However, Damian’s spirit exceeded the category of ordinary people. It was a spirit that had been trained since childhood due to people criticizing him for his otaku nature.

In the first place, if he were the owner of an ordinary mind, he wouldn’t have cried out in official meetings, “Isabel, I love you!” Neither would he have continued praising Grid-sama despite the criticism of the people. This meant he wasn’t a regular person.

‘This is too exciting!’ Damian succeeded in sublimating the enormous pressure into a joyful passion, and the anxiety in his gaze disappeared.

That’s right. Damian was also a protagonist. He was the same type as Grid.

‘Think about it again.’

Once he realized it was a crisis that could be overcome, he forced his brain to work. Damian thought about it for a while before coming up with a hypothesis, ‘What if the pope was an NPC and the current episode occurred?’

It was highly likely that the NPC pope would’ve easily overcome the current crisis by knowing about it beforehand due to the goddess’ divine message. This was because NPCs had the characteristic of flexibly adapting to already designed stories. However, players were different. They didn’t know the pre-designed story and could experience sudden crises like Damian was going through right now. Compared to NPCs, players were at a disadvantage.

Then Damian had an idea. ‘Players have more disadvantages than NPCs, but they also have a lot of advantages. Let’s think about it as the player Damian, not Pope Damian.’

The intervals between the explosions were gradually shortening, and the screams of the Rebecca followers rang out through the broken ceiling of the banquet hall. Damian gritted his teeth and struggled to ignore them. He couldn’t spare time for the people suffering in front of him and focused on thinking of an idea.

“Kikikik! Kihahahahahat!” Agnus’ mad laugh echoed and his hair had long been wildly swept all over the place from the fighting. Two demons were already dead, while others were injured. Agnus had lost two death knights, with only Lich Mumud remaining.

Yatan’s Fourth Servant Silvenas was also in bad shape. She was breathing hard and covered with blood. A named NPC representing a major force was struggling against just one player. Rose, who was overpowering Chucksley, felt horrified by this sight.

‘Isn’t Silvenas level 420?’

Yet a player in the 300s was dealing damage to her single-handedly? A typical level 300 player wouldn’t be able to push Silvenas to this extent. The power of a legendary class was greater than expected. Rose was filled with a fierce jealousy as she pointed her staff at Chucksley lying on the ground. In the past, he had been a sword that defended the Eternal Kingdom, and now he defended the Overgeared Kingdom.

Rose shook with rage at the fact that the NPC with the golden name had managed to grab her ankles for 10 minutes.

“Due to you, I couldn’t hunt the followers properly! A trash like you interfering...!”

Rose had received some subquests to hunt the Rebecca followers. It was a precious quest that increased her intelligence every time

she hunted a number of priests and paladins of the Rebecca Church. As such, she had expected to achieve massive growth from the subquest, but all her plans were completely destroyed by one NPC. The other Yatan Servants and black magicians had wiped out a large number of believers, and there wasn't much prey remaining.

“Die! Be wrapped in thorns and die! Tempting Thorns!”

Purple vines grew from the cracked ground. Then it happened the moment the sharp blade-like thorns tried to wrap around Chucksley's entire body.

“...!?”

A knife flew toward the thorn that was climbing up Chucksley's ankle and cut through it. Surprised, Rose turned toward the direction that the dagger came from while Chucksley turned red.

“Your Highness...”

“What?” Rose doubted her ears. She knew that Chucksley served Grid's son and that Lord was now around five or six years old. Still, the one at the end of her gaze really was Lord.

‘This little guy threw the dagger towards the vine and cut it off?’

No, it was too absurd...

Rose denied the reality and once again aimed toward Chucksley with her staff. Simultaneously, a new dagger flew and struck Rose exactly in the neck.

[You have suffered 1,300 damage.]

[The magic casting has been forcibly canceled.]

“Crazy...!”

It was a thin and sharp dagger. Rose pulled it out of her neck and once again turned to Lord, who was staring at her with eyes that resembled his father.

“You!”

There was a monster before her that shouldn't be allowed to grow up! Rose felt this instinctively and cast a new spell. This time the target of the spell was Lord. Then Lord pulled out a new dagger. The throwing skills he had learned from Kasim before he was even a toddler were being unfolded.

“Kuk...! Cough!” Once again, a dagger stabbed Rose's neck, and her casting was canceled! The daggers thrown by the little prince didn't deal her with fatal damage due to her legendary armor, but they were definitely a hindrance. It was enough to fill her with fury!

“You...! You are your father's son!”

Rose blamed Grid and the Overgeared members for her death during the Great Demon Belial raid. So, she didn't have any good feelings toward Grid and didn't care how young Lord was. She then opened a shield to block Lord's daggers and started chanting a spell.

“No!” Coke's and Royman's gazes shifted toward Lord from where they had been moving through the black magicians. Coke tried to throw himself over to protect Lord with his body. Flop! However, Coke fell to the ground because his stamina was at its limit. Instead, he witnessed Agnus, who had been struggling with Silvenas, reach out toward Lord.

Agnus' golden eyes shone fiercely as he moved his gaze backward. It was because he witnessed Rose casting magic toward Lord and Irene.

“This woman!”

“Are you selling one hand?”

“Kuk...!”

This was bad. The sight of Rose's disgraceful behavior agitated Agnus in an irreversible manner. With Agnus' gaze shifted to Rose,

Silvenas was now able to move freely. She moved through Lich Mumud's magic, reached Agnus' back, and swung her weapon at his heart.

"Ah...!" Irene's eyes shook as her son and her savior suffered a crisis at the same time. There was only one thing she could do now that she thought it was over.

"I'm sorry. I'm really sorry." Simultaneously, Agnus and Coke, who were struggling, apologized for their efforts being in vain. Irene rushed over as hard as she could and held her young son. This was the only thing Irene could do. She closed her eyes and waited for death. Her body would become a shield for her son to live.

"Your Majesty!" Frightened, Chucksley raised his body. He once again transcended his limits as he swung his sword as hard as he could to protect his queen and prince. However, Rose's casting time was shorter than the time it took for Chucksley's sword to cut Rose. Her magic was fired out. The giant flash of magic flew straight toward Irene and Lord, but Agnus couldn't defend them. He wasn't in a position to reach them because Silvenas was clinging to him.

"Kik...! Kikikik! Kihahahahat!"

'Again?'

He had become stronger than before, but he still couldn't save a woman? Agnus' eyes filled with shame when a voice reached his ears.

"Thank you for buying time, Agnus-chan." It was someone's holy voice. The person had taken his own life and resurrected at the Vatican's resurrection point. The voice belonged to Damian, who had broken free of the dark barrier in a very player-like manner.

He fell by Irene's and Lord's side and then turned to look at Agnus and Silvenas. A bright golden magic circle rose and

destroyed the black magic, forming a shockwave that caused Damian's white clothes to flutter. As Irene and Lord opened their eyes, they saw Damian's divine armor under his white clothes. After confirming that his mother was unharmed, Lord smiled at the person who was most reliable to him after his father.

“Teacher Damian!”

“I'm sorry I'm late. I will protect Lord-chan and your mother from now on.”

The grandeur of the pope captivated everyone. He had the light of the goddess' blessing. This was a man who competed with Sword Saint Kraugel in swordsmanship, the person who helped the Overgeared King become overgeared, and the person who learned to farm after Piaro.

One of the strongest players in the game overwhelmed the people present.

Chapter 868

“Soul Decay.”

“Dirty Whispers.”

“Mel-Pia’s Land.”

“Rising Desire.”

Pope Damian was greeted with a harsh reception by the black magicians. All types of black magic tried to neutralize Damian’s body, mind, and soul, but it was wishful thinking.

[The pope can’t be corrupted by darkness.]

[The ‘decay’ state has been resisted.]

[The ‘confused’ state has been...]

[The ‘hunger’ state has been...]

[The ‘berserk’ state has been...]

The pope had the power to block black magic at its source! Damian’s 80% dark resistance and 100% black magic CC resistance amazed the thousands of black magicians. Their magic didn’t go through at all? The black magicians were overwhelmed by Damian who denied their existence, and this had a profound effect on the battlefield.

[The emergence of the Rebecca Church’s pope has reduced the morale of the Yatan Church members.]

[The defense and magic resistance of the Yatan Church members have been reduced by 60%.]

[Yatan’s Servants have a duty to lead the members. The morale of Yatan’s Servants isn’t affected.]

“What...?”

Damian weakened thousands of black magicians with just his existence? Rose’s defense declined dramatically, and she witnessed

the black magicians failing to withstand the onslaught of the knights. She knew that the pope's strength was beginning to come through now!

'They were fighting in such a difficult situation.' Damian kept being bombarded with black magic and realized how hard the church members and knights of other kingdoms had been struggling while he had been trapped. They fought the enemies in front of them while enduring the curses on their bodies, minds, and souls...

Feeling in awe of them, Damian blessed the church members and the knights with the skill, Light Rain, that he had gotten during his second term as the pope.

[Light Rain Lv. 1]

[You have begged Goddess Rebecca for rain.

A divine golden rain will fall in a 300-meter radius around you.

Those who aren't evil will have a 50% chance of overcoming their current abnormal status and will regain 10% of their health.

If those hit by the rain are evil, the duration of their current abnormal status has a 50% chance of doubling and they will lose 10% of their health.

Skill Mana Cost: 5,000

Skill Cooldown Time: 50 minutes.]

It wasn't a definite cleanse, but it was a skill with many advantages. There was no doubt that it was a healing and offensive spell which even Saintess Ruby would admire. Moreover, it was a ranged skill that targeted all beings within 300 meters. A gold rain defeated the darkness of the night.

"Kuaaaack!" The black magicians struggled with the pain.

"Ahh..."

"I feel a bit better now!"

“Praise His Holiness!”

The Rebecca members, the royal family, and the knights enjoyed the peaceful moment. They recovered their lost physical strength, and their decreased morale started rising again. The situation was reversing. Rose was filled with questions while she shook from the pain. ‘How did he escape from the barrier in the first place?’

The Yatan Church viewed the Yatan Essence as an all-purpose item. From simple curses to summoning a great demon... there was nothing worse than the combination of Yatan Essence and black magic. With it, it had been possible to corrupt one of the strongest knights of the empire in the past. It could even be said that Pope Drevigo’s desires had been fueled by the essence and that it was possible to damage the world tree with the Yatan Essence.

The power of the Yatan Essence was absolute. The barrier created with the combination of the Yatan Essence and black magic should’ve contained Pope Damian to the end. Then how the hell had Damian escaped? Rose was questioning it when Aliburn shouted, “Rebecca’s dog! Stop this nasty rain right now!”

Yatan’s Third Servant threatened Pope Damian blatantly. While gesturing to the sword stuck in the rock, Aliburn shouted, “If you don’t stop resisting, your symbol will disappear.

“...!” The relieved Rebecca members were once again shaken. They belatedly recalled that the symbol of the church was in the hands of the enemy. “What should we do...?”

The older the group, the more attached they were to symbols. People felt proud of their organization through the presence of their historical symbols. It was why countries around the world named national treasures. The elders were fidgeting, but Damian replied with a casual attitude, “Get rid of that sword.”

“...?” Yatan’s Servants and members of the Yatan Church, as well as the Rebecca elders and members, doubted their ears.

The battle paused for a moment. They were at a loss because they hadn't expected Pope Damian to give up the symbol of the church so easily. Damian was aware of this. "I mean it. It is a worthless antique. What? A symbol? Isn't Goddess Rebecca the symbol of the Rebecca Church? Will the pope not be a pope? History? The history of the Rebecca Church has already been described in countless books. There is no reason to be obsessed with antiques."

"That is absurd logic! Your claim denies the value of all artifacts throughout the continent!"

"Do you recognize the value of those artifacts?"

"...?"

"You are someone who devotes yourself to the great demons and wants to turn humanity into cattle. What type of sophistry is this that you would discuss the value of artifacts?"

"..."

"In the first place, no matter how great the value, it is just a remnant of the past. The lives of the people in the present are more important than such things! Do you understand, you villain?!!" Damian channeled the heroes that he had followed for decades in anime and manhwa.

Shonen manga greatly influenced Damian's thoughts, and the relative simplicity made it hard for Aliburn to argue against. In the first place, the topic of the debate was disadvantageous to Aliburn.

The sight of the mute Aliburn served to further break down the morale of the Yatan Church. This didn't mean that the morale of the Rebecca Church rose though. The Rebecca members were disappointed with the pope's irresponsible words, and the situation was becoming a mess. Additionally, Damian had the Recapture the Holy Sword quest. If this quest failed, the penalty he would receive was huge. This meant he was in a position where he had to recover the sword.

Even so, there was a genuineness behind him treating the Holy Sword as a trivial antique. Think about it. What would happen if Damian clung to the Holy Sword? Aliburn would've aggressively exploited the weakness of the Holy Sword, and Damian's and the Rebecca members' situation would worsen. In the end...

"Kuoh...!" Aliburn held the sword in his arms. Seeing as the pope treated the Holy Sword as a trivial thing, Aliburn was now unable to use it as a threat.

'Good!' Damian maintained his calm expression while inwardly feeling delighted.

"It's annoying, but I'll take care of it myself! Come out! Hell's keepers!" Aliburn summoned a large number of cerberuses.

The three-headed dogs ran to Damian, shooting fire from their mouths. Damian couldn't withstand the heat with his divine power and stepped back. Then Yatan's Seventh Servant Hill started to act. How could he move his round, obese body so quickly? Damian's eyes widened as he moved to avoid the flames.

Dozens of fists poured toward him. "My stone fists fly at a rate of 12 times per second! Haaaap!"

This was the best monk of the Yatan Church! Hill's attack of 12 fists per second was reminiscent of a cat's paws, but unlike the cute appearance, his fists were as hard as stone. Damian's armor was hit 12 times per second.

"Kuhahaha! How is it? Can you afford to endure Hill's 12 punches per second?"

The pope, who overwhelmed the thousands of black magicians, started to swell up like a dog in front of Hill. Hill felt a sense of superiority and was determined to kill Damian. However, Damian had previously fought against a monster wielding a sword 30 times per second.

Hill's fists were slow in comparison to Pagma's Swordsmanship,

Link. So, Damian gradually adapted.

Damian guarded himself with a shield spell and blocked the attacks, which were visible with the naked eye, with a square shield. After Hill finished the 12 attacks, he staggered back for a short interval of 0.5 seconds to breathe, and Damian stabbed out with his sword during this gap.

“Keok!” Confusion filled Hill’s eyes as he screamed.

Damian scoffed, “I’ve fought with monsters much faster than you.”

Damian’s abilities rose to the extreme due to the divine light around him. On the other hand...

[The demon, Dyulebul, has been badly damaged and run away.]

[The demon, Cao, has gotten into great trouble and run away.]

[Lich Mumud has less than 20% of his health left. Be careful.]

‘This jerk!’

Damian’s Light Rain caused serious damage to Agnus who was already seriously injured. To be honest, Agnus felt like he had been hit in the back of the head. He thought that Damian was an ally who would help him, only for Damian to immediately attack Agnus and his demons.

Agnus glared at Silvenas in front of him. Like Agnus, Silvenas was also seriously wounded by the rain.

“I will kill you first...!”

“Damn traitor...! I will tear you to death!”

“Then I will cut off the pope’s head!”

“Then curse that Rebecca dog! Huh?”

Was Agnus an enemy or ally? Why did they start fighting? Silvenas felt frustrated and unhappy about being caught by this madman. At the same time...

“This is a problem.” In a small village below the Vatican, Sticks looked confused as he appeared on the road to the Vatican. “I can’t move directly into the Vatican because of a barrier. It will take time to analyze and pull down the barrier...”

“...”

It was a barrier that only allowed the entrance and exit of evil beings. Grid stared at the barrier with some nervous paladins and immediately came up with a solution.

“Blackening.”

“Your Majesty!”

The only way was for Grid to jump in alone. Sticks tried to dissuade him from passing through the barrier alone. However, Mercedes stopped Sticks. “The king will rescue the queen and the prince.”

Was this the attitude of a knight who was only concerned about Grid’s safety? Sticks thought it was absurd, but Grid smiled with satisfaction. “That’s right. Follow as soon as you break down the barrier. I will protect Irene and Lord until then...”

Grid wasn’t able to finish speaking. Dozens of black magic spells flooded toward him at the same time.

Chapter 869

The 2nd ranked black magician, Dolce, was very unhappy with this quest. Why did he have to protect the entrance while the others raided the Vatican?

‘I’m not a mere dog!’

Dolce had won the position of the 2nd ranked black magician with his talent and efforts. As the second-best among thousands of competitors, he was proud to be a genius. In the first place, black magicians found it harder to hunt than warriors, so it was great that he had reached his third advancement.

Yet he had to protect the entrance? Why did he need to block the entrance? Would the enemy even come here?

‘Dammit! How long are they planning to waste a talent like me?’

Wasting time while doing nothing was extremely annoying. Dolce’s complaints increased greater and greater in number as dozens of minutes passed by. He was jealous of Rose, who had broken into the Vatican and would get tremendous rewards.

‘If I just get a chance to become active...’

He would be as active as Rose, become one of Yatan’s Servants, and eventually surpass Rose! Dolce was filled with this conviction. His confidence was based on a realistic analysis, not arrogance. The former 1st ranked black magician, Yura, felt like an inescapable wall while Rose had no such force. Dolce didn’t think he was even worse than Rose. He just didn’t get a chance because he was unlucky.

‘A chance. If I get a chance, my position would be reversed with Rose right now... Huh?’

While Dolce was blaming his luck and was just carrying out his mission without any motivation, he sensed something.

Someone had crossed the barrier established at the foot of the mountain the Vatican was on, yet there was no notification window about the barrier being destroyed. It meant that the intruder was entitled to cross the barrier, which signified they were evil and likely to be on the side of the Yatan Church.

‘Was someone assigned a trivial task like me?’

They must be quite angry. Dolce got up from his rock sulkily, wondering who had joined him in this petty task.

“Hey.”

A black outfit...? The appearance of his colleague in the darkness couldn't be distinguished from this distance. Dolce frowned and tried to get closer. Then the moonlight shone through the rain clouds and revealed a newcomer wearing a crown on his head. The beautiful red and black jewels on the crown absorbed the moonlight and glowed brightly.

[You have been confused by the target! You have become defenseless. You can't take any action, and your defense and magic resistance are reduced by 40%.]

“...!?”

The biggest variable in combat was a person's status. The consequences of being caught in an abnormal state were severe, and the essence of winning a battle was to overcome it quickly. The 2nd ranked black magician, Dolce, couldn't be unaware of this fact. Like other rankers, he raised his resistance to various conditions to the extreme. Thus, he hadn't expected to become 'confused' just by looking at a person.

Was this at the same level as the 'medusa' that petrified a target by looking at them? Dolce was so creeped out that he got goosebumps. He felt like his breathing was going to stop, but there was one piece of good news.

[There is one second remaining for the confused state.]

The level of the confusion wasn't very high. Dolce's high resistance meant he was only affected by it for one second. Dolce was safe since the unknown person was 15 meters away from him. He judged that he could escape from the confusion and use magic before the person reached him.

‘Once I’ve confirmed who it is...’

One second... It felt like it took unusually long for this one second to pass. Dolce braced himself and searched the face of the target that was getting closer and closer. The person had developed jaw muscles, a high nose, and sharp eyes. The sharp black eyes looked coldly at the 2nd ranked black magician like he was a bug.

‘What?’ Dolce recalled a person with this combination of features and was astonished for two reasons. The first reason was that the finally visible ID of the enemy matched the person he had thought of. The second reason...

‘Fast?’

The target, who had been standing 15 meters away, moved and arrived right in front of Dolce in one second.

“Get lost.” The target was a man who wore demonic energy that was darker than night. He crushed the sky above the sky and rose above him. The Overgeared King Grid showed off the power of Blackening and Quick Movements as he swung his sword.

Dolce and the five black magicians with him were caught up in the black energy blades. Their mission had been to prepare for the enemy's intrusion. Unlike Dolce's thoughts, it wasn't a trivial mission. Anxiety and fear filled Dolce as he was hit by Grid's black flames and his health fell to the bottom.

‘Can they endure it?’

Would the black magicians and Yatan's Servants struggling with the enemy in the Vatican be able to cope with this enemy? Yatan's Servants were strong, but Rebecca's Daughters were present at the

Vatican. Dolce judged that those Yatan's Servants on the battlefield wouldn't be able to go against this variable called Grid.

"S...top!" Just before his death, Dolce used the danger flare that he never thought would be required. He hadn't been able to use magic against the intruder, but it was significant that he endured a blow and managed to send the signal flare. What would happen if he tried to shoot black magic instead? It would be useless though since he couldn't stop Grid anyway. Sending the signal flare was a wiser decision.

Dolce smiled with satisfaction at his own judgment and turned to gray. The people who would replace him appeared.

"They are nobodies."

The black magicians and black knights, who were scattered around the foothills, ran when they saw the signal. Like Dolce, the first thing they did was attack the intruder with magic. Normally, after simultaneously casting different curses, they would thoroughly neutralize the target. Then the black knights would finish off the target with their sword. It was a simple and effective combination.

"It didn't work?"

However, the black magic didn't have an effect? The black magicians were astonished at the black-haired man who resisted all types of black magic and hurriedly shouted, "Not yet...! Wait!"

Alas, it was too late. The black knights had already moved. They remembered the combined attack which they had practiced countless times and flew toward the target the moment the curses were released. Six sharp swords filled with corrupted sword energy flooded toward the man in black. The black knights naturally thought that their swords would hit him.

"...!"

Yet the man moved at a speed that was difficult to follow with

their eyes and avoided the attacks. Then he drew a circle with his sword and cut all the black knights around him.

“Cough...!”

Unlike the Rebecca Church, it was hard for the Yatan Church to foster knights. Divine magic had defensive spells which increased the physical ability of the caster in the initial stage, whereas early black magic often reduced physical abilities. Compared to the paladins, the black knights had low defense and high attack power, but having high attack power was meaningless if the attacks couldn't hit the target.

One sword strike, a second sword strike...

The black knights died every time Grid swung his Enlightenment Sword. As the black magicians watched their colleagues suffer greatly, they felt extremely fearful and stood still like stone statues.

“Wave.” Grid released a sword technique the moment Blackening and Quick Movements ended. Black waves of energy poured out in all directions, destroying the black magicians, the trees, and the rocks. Grid cleared the surrounding area and finally glimpsed the Vatican.

“Irene!! Lord...!”

‘Please be safe.’

Grid summoned Overgeared Corn and rushed forward aggressively.

Damian's shield and armor endured the fists that were striking it continuously, but the symbols of the pope—the silver armor and large shield—were being crushed. Hill's fists, that flew at a rate of 12 times per second, were definitely fast and powerful. Pope Damian was almost like a cockroach with his defense magic, buff magic, and healing magic. He had yet to die despite Hill hitting

him with his attack of 12 fists per second for a few minutes.

“Persistent bastard!” Hill gritted his teeth. Damian still had skills to use, but inwardly, he wasn’t feeling very good about this. Honestly, Damian was frustrated.

‘Is it a skill?’

It was difficult to see the fists that Hill was wielding as a basic attack. Whenever he swung his fists, he entered a super-armored state which resisted CC. Hill punched 12 times per second, then there was a one-second gap.

‘No matter how I think about it, it seems like a skill.’

Damian raised his shield the moment the punches came flying. As he took two steps back to offset the shockwave delivered through the shield, he was convinced Hill’s attack was a skill.

‘The moment it activates, super-armor is triggered. The skill will hit 12 times, then there is a cooldown of one second...!’

It could be called a fraudulent skill. Damian speculated that Hill had the greatest attack strength amongst Yatan’s Servants.

‘There is only one attack pattern, and it is very simple but...’

It wasn’t a form of attack that Damian could cope with. 12 fists were swung per second unconditionally, and they weren’t easy to defend or fight back against as the timing to counterattack was only a one-second gap. Unfortunately for Pope Damian, he didn’t have a skill which dealt powerful damage in one blow. He lacked attack power in exchange for a perfect balance and a large number of wide-area skills. So, it was impossible for Damian to knock down Hill during the one-second gap.

‘The situation is bad. This can’t continue.’

Damian couldn’t be tied up by Hill forever. If he couldn’t defeat Hill, then it was better for him to help his allies or kill the black magicians. However, who could deal with Hill except for him?

Rebecca's Daughters and the Red Knights were engaged in battle with the other Yatan's Servants.

‘If I can’t tie up Hill, my allies will be slaughtered...’

In the end, would he have to keep fighting Hill? Despite being unable to hurt Hill, would Damian have to keep defending while watching his allies repel the enemies?

‘No! It isn’t a situation where I can rely on anyone else!’

Damian couldn’t ignore that the Overgeared forces protecting Queen Irene and Prince Lord were exhausted. Unlike the Red Knights, the Overgeared troops had fought the enemies from the beginning and reached their limits. They were in great danger while Damian was still tying up Hill, which meant Irene and Lord could die. In the end, Damian had to choose. He had to deal with Hill alone, but it didn’t necessarily have to take a long time.

‘I will try it.’

Damian recalled the combat method that Grid had shown during the National Competition. He had hit harder in return for every hit received. That’s right. Damian planned to fight back instead of defending against Hill’s 12 punches.

‘My attack power is weaker, but I have to try.’

He would be hit by Hill, then he would strike back. Damian adopted this new combat style straight away, swinging his shield instead of blocking the flying fists with spells or his shield.

“Puhahat! Stupid fool!” Hill laughed when he read Damian’s intentions. Damian could only swing his sword 2–3 times per second, while Hill could punch 12 times per second.

“Two or three hits in comparison to 12 hits...? What does that mean? Puhahahat!”

Damian was using a heal? It was futile though as Hill had been hiding a hidden card!

“Strike harder! Adadadada!”

Hill had an attack power buff. His fists suddenly turned red, and he started to deal twice the damage to Damian. Damian’s healing skills couldn’t keep up. “Kuk...!”

“Teacher Damian!”

“Your Holiness!”

It was a great crisis! The Rebecca members and royalty turned pale when they saw Pope Damian start to be pushed. In particular, Lord was filled with deep frustration. “I...! I wish I was an adult!”

Then he would’ve easily saved his mother from the crisis and would’ve helped Damian. When would he become an adult? Lord clenched his small fists and tears filled his eyes.

“Pagma’s Swordsmanship.” A man dropped in through the broken ceiling of the banquet hall.

His target, Hill, scoffed, “Who is this bastard? Do you want to taste my fist too?”

Hill entered the super-armored state and aimed one, two, three... twelve fists at the man. His fists, which couldn’t be followed by eyes, aimed at the man’s face, chest, and sides. It happened in just one second.

In that one second, the man...

“Link.”

He cut Hill 30 times per second in a much stronger manner!

Chapter 870

During the time when he had been waiting for Sticks to recover his mana, when he couldn't teleport straight to the Vatican, when he faced the barrier surrounding the Vatican, and when his ankles were caught by successive enemies... Grid had inwardly believed that there was no need to fret.

He had believed that Irene and Lord were safe. After all, Damian and Isabel were in the Vatican. Grid knew they would watch over his wife and son, and so he calmed his heart. Yes, Damian and Isabel were a great help to Grid just by existing. If it wasn't for them, Grid could never be so calm. It might've taken him more time to get to the Vatican due to nervousness and a blurred judgment.

"Fortunately, I made it on time." Grid landed on the ground after exchanging attacks with Yatan's Seventh Servant Hill, then he saw Irene and Lord. Although they were both mentally and physically exhausted, they were mostly unharmed. There were no injuries on their bodies.

"It is lucky. It is really lucky..." Relieved, a bright smile appeared on Grid's face. It was an excellent smile. The first people to see Grid were so pure that they misinterpreted him as an angel.

"Your Majesty!"

"Father!"

Irene's and Lord's eyes turned red as they welcomed Grid. The husband and father who had just appeared in a desperate crisis seemed like the world's greatest hero to them. They weren't mistaken. The Grid before them was indeed a hero of heroes.

[You have discovered a strong person of this era!]

[You have discovered a strong person of this era!]

[You have discovered a strong...]

The purple-red aura around Grid thickened rapidly. Rebecca's Daughters, Yatan's Servants, 2nd Imperial Prince Dulandal, and the solo number knights all provoked the Hero King's fighting energy.

"Everybody..." Grid looked at the young knights while the fighting energy surrounded him. The knights were so injured that it was hard to find any part of them that was unscathed. Yet they were still surrounded around Irene and Lord, even as the swords in their hands trembled. Grid noticed how they had received all types of injuries and had been hit by many curses in their fierce battle to protect their masters.

"Thank you. I really thank you," he said to Kasim, Chucksley, and the young knights. Irene and Lord were safe because they had fought with all their strength. Grid thanked them before looking at Hill who was getting up. Hill's health gauge had fallen to 9/10th after being hit by Pagma's Swordsmanship, Link. On the other hand, Grid lost 9,600 health, and his health gauge was less than 9/10th.

Damian confirmed their health statuses and shouted, "Grid, even you will find it hard to face him!"

In the process of dealing with Hill, Damian estimated that Hill had an approximate health of 50 million. Furthermore, his attack power was at least 1.6 times higher than Damian's while his defense was only slightly lower than Damian's. Grid's attack power and defense might be two times higher than Damian's, but it wouldn't make a big difference to Hill. Basically, Grid was at a disadvantage in facing Hill.

"He is a monster who can use his skill without any restrictions! You should avoid a frontal fight!"

Hill's skill of 12 punches per second could be used continuously while Pagma's Swordsmanship had a long cooldown time. Hence, Damian judged that no player could win in a one-on-one match

against Hill, including Grid. Grid listened closely to Damian's words.

“He is strong. He has high defense and attack power.”

Grid lost 800 health every time he was hit by Hill's fist. If all 12 punches hit him, he would lose 9,600 health. Additionally, Hill could unleash the 12 punches every second. Hill's attack power was threatening even when taking into consideration the healing power of Doran's Ring, the blood-sucking ability of Elfin Stone's Ring, Tiramet's Power, and the health restoration and shield creation of the First King Title.

‘This guy is on a different level from Dark Bus.’

Grid had experience with shattering Yatan's Servants several times in the past few years, so he could compare the current Yatan's Servants with the previous ones in a more objective manner than anyone else. This meant he was forced to evaluate Hill highly.

‘I would've been defeated if we had met at the time of the National Competition.’

Yes, Hill was really strong. It wasn't unusual that a skilled player like Damian was driven to the defensive.

“Item Combination.”

It was why Grid revealed his power right at the beginning.

[Belial's Staff and the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires will be combined!]

Grid made a judgment. If he activated things like the flames emission, the illusions, the red lightning bolt, the black flames, and so on, it would be counted as using magic. This meant a shield that absorbed 5,000 health would be created. The combination of the sword and staff was the only means to resist Hill's overwhelming attack power.

“A spear?” From Hill’s perspective, an unidentified enemy had suddenly appeared. Hill slightly shrank back at the sight of the black-haired man with a beautiful crown on his head. The swordsman who could swing a sword faster than Hill’s fists abandoned the sword and armed himself with a spear.

In spite of that, Hill’s confusion only lasted for a moment. He quickly scoffed inwardly, ‘He must be trying to maximize his strength because it is hard to deal me a big blow no matter how hard he swings the sword.’

It was stupid. Didn’t the enemy know it was useless regardless of whether it was a big blow or many blows? Among Yatan’s Servants, Hill was the strongest physically. While swinging his fist, he shouted, “You can’t be just quick or strong! In order to win against me, you need a powerful attack that can penetrate my defense faster than I move! Kuhahahat!”

Hill jumped forward energetically. His face, chest, and rounded belly seemed ridiculous at first, but no one could laugh at him. Everyone shrank back at the presence of the powerful man who had already dominated Pope Damian.

“Danger!” Lord’s worried voice echoed through the banquet hall at the sight of his father in a crisis.

“...!” Hearing the distant scream of a boy, Agnus got up from where he was fighting outside the banquet hall with Lich Mumud. He had to defeat the enemy in front of him to protect the woman and child! Silvenas’ fists struck the jaws of the shaking Agnus. Agnus spat out blood, and his chest was exposed without any defenses. Silvenas’ sword cut at his chest.

“Kuk...!”

“What are you—? Why do you care about other people when you are dying? Why protect the enemy in the first place? Are you crazy?”

Yatan's Servants were wicked people. The people who aimed at the destruction of the world and the fall of humanity ultimately couldn't be good. From a general point of view, Yatan's Servants were crazy. Yet even they thought that Agnus was a madman. Grasping the wound on his chest, Agnus giggled, "Is it possible to maintain my mind in a world with crazy people like you? Huh~? Kik...! Kikik!"

Agnus himself admitted that he was crazy. He had gone insane the night his lover experienced that terrible pain.

"Mumud!" Agnus cried out to Lich Mumud, who was running out of mana. "Save the queen and the prince!"

"...?" Lich Mumud hesitated. It was a reaction that showed he hadn't expected his master to give an order to protect others.

Agnus urged him with bloody eyes, "Get out of here quickly!"

"..."

The highest level undead lich was able to 'think.' They had emotions and will. However, duty was more important than personal feelings and will. From the day he had been dominated by Agnus until today, Lich Mumud had completed many undesired missions. He had harmed countless people under his master's commands, causing Mumud to feel like he was in hell. This time was an exception. His master's command coincided with his will.

Clack... Clack clack... Lich Mumud stepped toward the banquet hall, wielding his magic power. Silvenas tried to stop him.

"Where are you going?" Agnus blocked Silvenas' way. Silvenas turned her sword on the guy who would die soon and had no more mana.

"You crazy guy!" Silvenas' sword pierced Agnus' abdomen. She thought that Agnus would die like this because he had already lost his immortality.

"Kik...! Kikikik!" Strangely, Agnus didn't die, yet the abdomen

pierced by Silvenas' sword didn't heal. Agnus' body was clearly in tatters. No health could be felt from him. So how was he still alive? Silvenas took a step back out of confusion and belatedly realized that Agnus was on the boundary between life and death right now.

“Lich Transformation? You even consumed your soul for the sake of protecting others?!”

“Kik...! Kikikik!”

Death knights and demons appeared around Agnus, who recovered some of his magic power after becoming a lich. Silvenas felt a threat to her life.

‘What is this...?!’ Yatan’s Third Servant Aliburn was astonished by the man who had suddenly entered the battlefield. It was because he knew the identity of the man with the purple-red aura.

‘Hero King!’

The legend of Sword Saint and Hero King Muller having sealed several great demons was famous. The Hero King, Demon Slayer, and Rebecca’s Daughters were the greatest enemies for the Yatan Church and the great demons. The Hero King was now showing up at this timing...? Did Rebecca intervene?

‘...No, this is the best chance!’ A smile appeared on Aliburn’s face as he stopped shrinking back. Hill was Dark Bus’ successor and the teacher of former Yatan’s Servants. Unlike the previous servants who had been killed due to being vulnerable in close combat, Hill was someone who specialized in individual combat power. It was impossible to defeat him in a one-on-one match.

‘Hill was specifically chosen by Amoract. He has a secret weapon that can destroy the Hero King.’

Aliburn’s expectations soared into the sky. He saw this as a genius opportunity God Yatan created. It was a chance to wipe out the Rebecca Church and the Hero King at the same time!

“Take this punch!” The shining Hill aimed 12 punches toward the Hero King. The 25th great demon, Dantalian, had given ‘Fighting Knowledge’ to Hill. When it evolved, Hill gained the power to break the sky. Just like the pope, Aliburn judged that the Hero King would soon be forced on the defensive and forced to his knees. However, the result was different from Aliburn’s expectations.

“What?” Aliburn’s eyes shook as he watched the battle. Every time the Hero King swung his spear, lightning and flames struck. Hill was turned to rags while the Hero King was surrounded by shields on all sides. The two of them exchanged attacks, but Hill was the only one damaged while the Hero King’s body was still intact.

“What is this?”

Wasn’t this above the legendary Muller? Alburn’s face paled.

“Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle!”

A myth, myth, and myth...

The myth rated Belial’s Staff and Enlightenment Sword, which were combined using a god’s blessing, far exceeded the category of a legend. This was the moment when the Yatan Church’s Hill was sentenced to death.

[You have killed Yatan’s Seventh Servant, Hill.]

[Dantalian’s Knowledge Fragment has been obtained.]

[Your level has risen.]

[Your level has risen.]

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[Dantalian's Knowledge Fragment]

[★Fighting Knowledge ★]

-A fragment containing the fighting knowledge of the 25th great demon, Dantalian.

Most of the knowledge is lost, but it is far beyond the knowledge of an ordinary human.

Martial arts will evolve one step further.

Knowledge Acquisition Conditions: A martial artist type profession.

Knowledge Acquired: All skill level +1. 10% increase in attack speed, 20% increase in evasion.]

‘This is a great demon's ability?’

Four years after becoming Pagma's Descendant, none of Grid's skills had reached the master level. It was extremely difficult to raise skill levels, which meant that the value of the Dantalian's Knowledge Fragment was unreasonably high. This wasn't even all of the knowledge.

Despite the two levels he gained from killing Hill, Grid had been disappointed when only one old booklet dropped. Then his thoughts changed after reading the description of the booklet. Rather than disappointed, he was now satisfied, and his admiration for it was far beyond his satisfaction.

‘Is there something like a blacksmith's knowledge fragment? In any case, this knowledge would be a great help to Regas.’

Grid didn't think about how much it could be sold for and the people it could be sold to. He had no intention of taking anything from his colleagues. Right now, he wasn't frantic about immediate gains. It wasn't because he had become a pushover who easily gave

things to others. Instead, it was because he was certain that the stronger his colleagues and friends became, the more they could be of great help to him and his precious ones.

Grid judged that the benefits gained from Regas acquiring Dantalian's Knowledge Fragment were much higher than the value of a few coins. In the first place, he could get money easily.

‘Regas will pay me back like Jishuka and Yura.’

That's right. Grid was unconsciously making a project where the Overgeared members would be indebted to him.

[The duration of Item Combination is over.]

[Belial's Staff and the Lightning Sword Born from Enlightenment and Strong Desires have been separated.]

[The cooldown time of Item Combination is reset by the effect of the skill 'Divinity'.]

The spear reverted back to the form of a sword and a staff. Aliburn was stunned as he watched Grid kill Hill and return the staff to his inventory. It was due to the familiar earrings hanging from the black-haired man's ears. Aliburn was sure that the tasteful ivory earrings were Dark Bus' earrings—the ones he'd worn during the mission to infiltrate the Saharan Empire. It was the strongest artifact with the Blackening ability, which turned the wearer into a half-demonkin once every 12 hours...

‘Is it him?’ Aliburn had heard the name of the Overgeared King.

It was impossible not to know the famous person who built up a new kingdom. Yet he was also the person who killed Dark Bus...?

‘No, it is strange to think that he killed Dark Bus. Dark Bus was performing a mission to drive the empire into chaos. There was no reason for him to be killed. It doesn't add up...’

Aliburn denied it only to be surprised again. He noticed the ring that Grid was wearing on his finger. It was a thin black ring. This

was Dark Bus' Ring, which consumed the wearer's mana and exploited the dispel function. Aliburn could no longer deny it. Dark Bus' killer... He had to acknowledge that the Overgeared King was the Yatan's Servants' Slaughterer that he had been searching for.

'He is a more famous person than I expected!' Aliburn was ready to chew on Grid's skull.

Simultaneously, some people cheered after seeing Grid kill Hill while others felt desperate.

"Overgeared King! The Hero King and Yatan's Servants' Slaughterer!" Aliburn's scream soared into the sky.

It had only been two minutes. Despite seeing Grid take care of Hill in that short amount of time that the items were combined, Aliburn didn't shrink back. Grid was able to sense that Aliburn was a tough opponent.

'He knows that I'm tired.'

Grid had already exhausted skills like Blackening on the way to the Vatican and then shortly after arriving there. Having placed Irene and Lord's safety as the top priority, he had used most of his trump cards at the beginning. It also meant that Hill was strong and Grid wanted to get rid of some of the enemy's overwhelming numbers.

In fact, the battle was going as he intended. Pope Damian's appearance had demoralized the black magicians earlier, and now they were on the verge of losing their fighting spirit after witnessing Hill's death. Currently, the black magicians attack power and defense were lowered.

However, Aliburn's momentum had risen. He wasn't weak enough to be shaken by Hill's death, and he was aware that Grid had consumed a lot of power.

"You just caught me off guard with your divinity skill. But even

the Hero King can't exert divine skills consecutively."

Aliburn didn't care about the power of a divine skill because he was familiar with them. He pointed a finger at Grid. The tips of Aliburn's long fingernails were blackened, but it wasn't nail polish. His fingernails had been stained by the blood of countless humans. Just like most of Yatan's Servants, Aliburn was a terrible murderer. He could slaughter innocent children for his own ambitions and for the church.

"Warning Cannon."

It took only 0.5 seconds for the black magic power to focus on his fingertips. Then took him another 0.5 seconds to fire it. It was one second in total. The focused magic power gun that Aliburn fired destroyed all the Rebecca paladins in its path. Its ultimate target was Grid.

Warning Cannon, Warning Curtain, Warning Sphere, and so on—this transcendent black magic had been presented to Aliburn by the true First Servant, Amoract. It allowed Aliburn to overflow with confidence.

"This is a treasure that I kept as a means to harm Rebecca's Daughters! It is an absolute power that can't be sustained even by the Hero King!" Aliburn shouted even before it hit.

Soon after, Grid was swept up in the explosion. The wall of the banquet hall where Grid was standing couldn't withstand the shock and collapsed. The ground was broken, and dust filled the whole area, hiding everyone from view.

"Grid!"

"Your Majesty!"

Shouts rang out from all over the place. They witnessed the power of Aliburn's magic cannon and thought it was unlikely that Grid was safe. Pope Damian and Lord were the same even though they were people who knew Grid's skill and trusted him more than

anyone else in the world.

“Father!” Lord yelled in a trembling voice while feelings of anxiety rose within him. The child wanted to run over to his father.

“He is okay,” Irene said as she grabbed onto Lord. Her hands were no longer trembling. All her fears from the past had been wiped out the moment Grid appeared. Her trust in Grid was absolute, and Damian and Lord were unable to argue against it.

“Phew.” As if rewarding them for their faith, Grid emerged safe and sound. His ring shone red as soon as he escaped from the dust. It was Dark Bus’ Ring, which dispelled the attack and became hotter as it devoured Grid’s mana. This was the sign of an explosion that was soon to occur. Once the ring absorbed 5,000 of the wearer’s mana, Skill Dispel had to be used two times in 10 minutes or it would cause enormous damage to the wearer.

‘I need to dispel another attack,’ Grid grumbled inwardly and sent a provocative gaze to Aliburn. He was planning to fight back after neutralizing Aliburn’s next round of attack. However, Aliburn was unexpectedly calm and just stared at Grid silently without using any magic. It gave off a creepy feeling.

‘Since when?’

The other black magicians had also stopped using magic. They remained silent and were being hit one-sidedly by the Rebecca members and their knights. The momentum of the Rebecca members rose, but Grid’s spine was cold.

‘Do they know about Dark Bus’ Ring?’

That’s right. The members of the Yatan Church knew the characteristics of Dark Bus’ Ring and were inducing it to explode. So, of course, they wouldn’t give Grid a chance to dispel a skill.

[The amount of magic power accumulated in Dark Bus’ Ring is too high. Dark Bus’ Ring can’t endure it.]

[Warning. There are 30 seconds left until Dark Bus' Ring explodes. The explosion will permanently destroy Dark Bus' Ring, and the wearer will lose their life.]

“F...!” It was a terrible situation! Grid barely contained the curse when he thought about Lord and Irene's presence and shouted urgently, “Damian! Attack me with a skill!”

The Skill Dispel attached to Dark Bus' Ring was difficult to use. He had to directly block the skill by making the ring come into contact with it. Dark Bus' Ring rating was not legendary but unique because its utilization was low and the penalty was high.

“Hah? U-Understood!”

Grid suddenly wanted Damian to attack him...? Damian found it hard to understand, but he followed Grid's orders anyway. However, he failed to activate the skill.

“Warning Curtain.”

It was due to Aliburn's intervention. He created an enchantment that made all living things in it unable to use skills.

[Warning. There are 20 seconds left until Dark Bus' Ring explodes.]

“Damn!”

In the end, Grid was forced to take special measures. He had to give up the ring. Although the ring was definitely a valuable item, Irene and Lord would be in danger if he were too greedy. He had no choice, but avoiding the penalty wasn't that easy.

[You can't take Dark Bus' Ring off.]

There were 15 seconds left until the ring would explode, yet he couldn't remove it from his finger. 10 seconds, 9 seconds, 8 seconds...

“Shit!” Grid's nervousness reached the peak. Then a skeleton emerged from beyond the collapsed outer wall and used magic. A

total of six magic power pillars sprang up, sweeping through the black magicians surrounding Irene and Lord. Grid instinctively reached out toward a pillar.

[The Skill Dispel option of Dark Bus' Ring has been activated!]

[Dark Bus' Ring has removed the target skill. All the mana accumulated in Dark Bus' Ring has been consumed, and it has entered the resting state.]

The ring fell silent four seconds before it was going to explode.

"Pant... Pant... Pant..." Feeling like he had regained 10 years, Grid looked away. He held a killing intent toward the lich who suddenly appeared and shot magic toward Irene and Lord.

"Mumud!" Agnus was hiding somewhere and watching the situation...?

"Crazy jerk!" Grid's mind was filled with anger when he heard another voice.

"Warning Sphere." Aliburn used new magic. He was upset about losing a great opportunity to get rid of Grid. Dozens of black spheres formed around Aliburn. The number of spheres wasn't something that the Overgeared Knights, the God Hands assisting Kasim, and the already summoned Noe, Randy, and the Overgeared Skeletons could handle.

"Get out of the way!" Aliburn's purpose was to destroy the Rebecca Church and increase the influence of the Yatan Church. It was a bonus to warn the kingdoms all over the continent by killing their royal families. Yet the king of a small nation was grabbing at his ankles? The spheres of darkness, which were flying in all directions, threatened not only Grid's group but all the other royalty as well. Aliburn planned to accomplish his purpose after cleaning up everyone around him.

He still had power. The new power that Amoract had given him prior to the invasion could achieve his purpose. The Hero King?

The Overgeared King? Hill had already weakened this unexpected variable—Grid. So, Aliburn judged that Grid wasn't a big threat.

‘It is the end.’ Rose smiled.

Agnus' sudden betrayal, the little prince's unexpected skills, the imperial prince's ability, Damian's escape, Grid's appearance, and so on—she had felt uneasy about these unexpected variables which occurred in succession but not anymore. She believed that Yatan's Third Servant, Aliburn—the powerful and clever NPC who planned out this Vatican raid—would trample on Grid, Damian, and Agnus like they were insects.

In fact, Grid felt a serious crisis.

‘There are too many!’

The number of dark spheres reached several hundred. He used Freely Move to reach Aliburn, but Aliburn didn't stop casting. Instead, he endured Grid's swordsmanship with his high health and defense and continued to create more spheres. Once the spheres—which contained magic power—exploded, the whole area would be devastated.

Grid could somehow survive with his various titles, item effects, and passive skills, but Irene, Lord, and the young Overgeared knights were the problem. He might lose all of them.

‘I can't summon any knights because of the ward blocking outside summoning. What should I do?’

The enemy was too strong, and the situation was the worst. Grid was at a disadvantage since he had to protect everyone.

‘Maybe...’

From beginning to end, had the Yatan Church's victory already been decided? The players couldn't put up a resistance anymore, and it was the worst ending...

‘Am I destined to lose Irene and Lord?’

Grid turned pale at the thought and looked around. His gaze fell on the hilt that suddenly showed up through Aliburn's robe.

[Sword Stuck in the Rock]

A quest arrow appeared above the item with the golden name. It looked exactly like the arrow which had floated above Lifael's Spear the first time he saw it a few years ago... Grid instinctively grabbed the hilt. Aliburn had been watching the dark spheres with satisfied eyes when he suddenly panicked. "You, what are you...?"

"Legendary Blacksmith's Appraisal!"

[The blacksmith who became a legend can appraise items with an excellent discerning eye. If a hidden feature exists in the target item, it will be found.]

Ttiring~

[You have discovered a hidden feature in the item!]

[!!!! The first holy sword of humanity. It was sealed in the stone by the original seven malignant saints!]

[★Hidden Quest★ Crossroad of Good and Evil has occurred!]

[The power of God's Command has shattered the Stone of Original Sin!]

[The quest item First Incomplete Holy Sword has been obtained!]

"What?"

Chapter 872

It was a quest that could be cleared. Damian was convinced about it. His confidence hadn't changed even when he was trapped in the barrier, when he was caught by Hill, or when Aliburn summoned hundreds of black spheres.

‘Based on the worldview, this crisis must be passed.’

He was sure it would be maintained even if Grid hadn't shown up. In fact, Rebecca's Daughters weren't using White Transformation as promised. If they did, the momentum was likely to change. Thus, Damian had been waiting for the story to reach a specific section—the moment when Rebecca's Daughters would go out with all their strength.

However, the situation went differently from Damian's expectations. Before Rebecca's Daughters could move, Grid changed things dramatically. Something happened the moment Grid touched the sword in Aliburn's arms. It was the sword that was sealed into the rock.

A brilliant light exploded, and the image of the sword Grid had drawn out didn't fade away. Instead, it became complete.

“What?”

Pagma's Descendant was interfering with the symbol of the Rebecca Church?

‘What are his qualifications?’

The keepsakes of Fifth Pope Franz—the Holy Light Set—were made by Pagma, so it wasn't strange for them to be associated with Grid.

‘Did Pagma have anything to do with the first holy sword?’

Ttiring~

Damian was feeling confused when a notification window

popped up.

[The Recapture the Holy Sword quest has been updated to Recapture the Holy Sword (2)!]

[Recapture the Holy Sword (2)]

[★ Hidden Quest ★]

The sealed holy sword, which was in the Yatan Church's hands, has been liberated with the power of the seven malignant saints.

The seven malignant saints, who wanted to move away from being half-gods and become true gods, sought the sword in the past.

The Holy Sword is the symbol of Rebecca and proof of the pope!

You must retrieve it!

Be wary of the evil person seeking the throne of a god!

Quest Clear Conditions: Take back the Sealed Holy Sword.

Quest Clear Reward: The blessing of Goddess Rebecca, God Judar, and God Dominion. Affinity with the elders will reach the peak, and you will be respected by all believers.

Quest Failure: Many believers will be disillusioned with the ineffective church leadership and will leave the church. You won't be eligible to serve as the pope. Goddess Rebecca will be disappointed in you. Level -10.]

‘The seven malignant saints? Where did this suddenly come from?’

For the majority of ordinary players, the seven malignant saints episode was still uncharted territory. Even Overgeared King Grid had only recently learned about this story. Additionally, he only knew because Kraugel told him. However, Damian wasn't an ordinary player. He was a ranker who had a formerly hidden class, and he was the pope of the Rebecca Church. Just like Kraugel, he had dominated many quests. No, perhaps Damian was a player

with even more knowledge and information sources than Kraugel. He knew that the malignant saints were absolutely evil.

‘They became half-gods due to the gods’ favor, but they weren’t satisfied and aimed for the gods’ position...’

He had heard that one of them had inherited the power of light from Goddess Rebecca. Just thinking about the seven malignant saints made Damian angry. How dare they betray Goddess Rebecca who cared for humanity with love and compassion? From the time he became the Goddess’ Agent until the day he became a pope, Damian had learned many things about Rebecca’s work. He admired Rebecca and didn’t like the seven villains who had tried to hurt her by betraying her.

‘Wait...’ Damian was astonished. Weren’t the quest’s contents updated the moment Grid touched the holy sword? Then that meant the mention of the ‘evil person’ who used the power of the seven malignant saints was referring to Grid.

“Grid!” Damian felt a chill as his voice entered Grid’s ears. Grid was also looking at a new quest. It contained a powerful temptation that was causing him to feel conflicted.

[Crossroad of Good and Evil]

[★ Hidden Quest ★]

After all sorts of adventures, you have won the power, God’s Command, that the fourth malignant saint, Taren, left for later generations.

You can hear Taren’s voice, “The light was so bright that I couldn’t see the darkness hidden beyond it.”

The voice of the War God Zeratul is also heard, “Human. This isn’t Taren’s arrangement. It is Dominion’s and my arrangement. Don’t listen to the voice of the corrupted one.”

The Incomplete Holy Sword is starting to be eroded by the power of God’s Command.

The Incomplete Holy Sword is a symbol of Rebecca.

Please make a choice.

Will you rely on the power of the seven malignant saints to make the Incomplete Holy Sword yours or return it to the Rebecca Church?

Pioneer your own path!

Rewards for Gaining the Incomplete Holy Sword:

The 'Holy Sword of the 4th Evil' will be acquired.

* Your race will evolve from a human into a half-god. A half-god is a race that transcends humanity and approaches being a god. There will be room for great increases of all abilities.

* The passive skill God's Command is strengthened. The probability of activating God's Command will become 100%. However, a critical hit won't be applied to skills that God's Command is used on.

* The skill, Corrupted Holy Sword, will unlock.

* You will be cursed by Goddess Rebecca, God Dominion, God Judar, and God Zeratul.

* Affinity with the Rebecca Church, Dominion Church, and Judar Church will fall to minus values.

* Followers of the Warrior God will chase you.

Rewards for Returning the Incomplete Holy Sword:

Goddess Rebecca's blessing. Affinity with the Rebecca Church will rise to the maximum.

* Affinity with the Rebecca Church is already at the maximum.]

Duguen! Duguen! Duguen!

Grid's heart thumped as he read the contents of the quest. His greed wriggled under the enormous stimulation. Grid's original heart was crying.

‘Grab the Holy Sword!

‘A half-god, half-god!

‘No one will be able to beat me! I will reign forever!

‘The whole world will see me everyday, and people will look up to me.

‘My first love Ahyoung will feel regretful every night. Huhuhut.

‘What about those guys who bullied me?

‘This is a unique opportunity. It is dangerous now. A strong person like Kraugel or Agnus can take my position at any time.

‘What about those people hoping for the downfall of the Overgeared Kingdom? What if I am deprived of everything and return to that awful life?’

Duguen! Duguen! Duguen!

His conflict was biased. Grid’s greed was too strong, despite receiving many rewards and overcoming his past. He gripped the holy sword harder.

“Grid!”

Grid heard Damian’s shout. Damian sincerely respected and envied Grid. Grid liked him too. It sometimes felt akin to a dream that he shared a mutual admiration with a great person like Damian. However, it wasn’t enough. Grid didn’t let go of the holy sword in his hand.

“Grid! Wake up!”

Then he heard Isabel’s cry. Isabel—she was a poor woman. Grid had saved her, and she gained happiness. The feelings of gratitude, love, and respect she felt for Grid were a great source of strength and pride for him. He felt a bit sorry to let her down.

“I...” Grid’s tight grip on the holy sword loosened slightly. Still, this only lasted for a moment. Grid increased his strength again

because he couldn't suppress the greed inside him.

“Your Majesty!”

“Father!”

“...!”

He heard Irene's and Lord's cries. That's when Grid's mind awakened, and he shifted his gaze from the sword for the first time. The first woman who loved him—she was the woman who devoted herself to him and taught him what happiness and rest were. Additionally, there was the fruit of his love with her—the child who followed his back.

Then other faces appeared in his mind—Huroi, Yura, Jishuka, Regas, Pon, Lauel, Peak Sword, and Toon.

“I...”

The biased conflict changed. He suppressed his boiling desire and shouted with all his strength, “I can't risk my family and colleagues...!!”

What was he doing alone? His people would suffer if he gave into his desires and became hostile to the world. He didn't want that. Right now, his life wasn't his own.

“Damian!” Grid shouted and threw the holy sword into the air. Pope Damian caught the turning sword, and a bright smile appeared on Damian's face.

Phew, it was really fortunate. What would he have done if Grid had become the second coming of a malignant saint? It was the worst situation that Damian didn't even want to imagine.

“This... Stop all of them!” Aliburn shouted urgently, overwhelmed by the divine power released from the holy sword. He had lost his calm expression long ago, but he was already too late. Yatan's Servants and the black magicians weren't able to react yet.

“Goddess’ Will.” The pope waved the first holy sword, and a divine power was manifested. The sword glowed in the darkness, getting rid of all the dark curses and cutting the Yatan’s Servants and black magicians in its path.

“Kuock!!”

The first holy sword was a weapon against the great demons. Yatan’s Servants couldn’t endure its power. Aliburn suffered a terrible blow and collapsed, while Grid started dancing in response to Damian’s move.

“Pagma’s Swordsmanship!”

“You!” Aliburn glared at Grid with bloodshot eyes. The grudge he felt toward the person who made all his plans useless was too great to be described. “I will die and take you to hell with me!”

“Kill!”

“Kuk...! Kuaaaaak!”

“H-Hik...!”

“The Third Servant!”

The deathly screams of the wicked being who threatened thousands of Rebecca members drove the black magicians into chaos. They ran away while the Rebecca paladins chased them.

“Pant... Pant...”

Aliburn disappeared in a gray pillar of light, and Grid stumbled. The physical and mental fatigue he felt while fighting to protect his precious ones were tremendous. The sudden drop of stamina meant it wasn’t strange if he fell down immediately. However, Grid stood firm. He had to hold out for his wife and son.

“Your Majesty!”

“Father!”

“It’s fortunate. I’m glad you’re safe.”

As he embraced them, the smile on Grid's face was as warm as the portrait of the goddess. The Rebecca Church's elders gazed at Grid with a different expression in their eyes. Meanwhile, Isabel looked like she was on the verge of deifying Grid.

Chapter 873

Grid touched the red-eyed Irene gently. It was an attitude like he was handling the most precious treasure in the world.

“I was praying that you were safe the entire time I headed here. Thank you. I’m really thankful that you’re safe.”

“Your Majesty...”

Grid’s eyes, hand gestures, and warm words gave Irene great happiness. Irene’s affection for Grid was now close to infinitely deep.

“You don’t know how happy I am to be here...”

If Irene had been alone in the crisis, she would’ve felt more sorry than joyful. She would’ve felt guilty that she had forced the king to come all the way here while he was busy taking care of the country and its people. However, Irene wasn’t alone in today’s crisis. Her son Lord, the loyal Kasim and Chucksley, and the young knights who were the future of the country were all in danger. Irene felt a deep gratitude and respect to Grid who had saved all of them.

“On the first day we met, you were fighting to save someone,” Irene recalled. Those had been the days when she was just the eldest daughter of an earl. Back then, Doran was still alive, and Grid had helped rescue her when she was kidnapped by the Yatan Church. “I first heard about you when I was made the ruler of Winston.”

She had heard there was a hero who saved the powerless people from an evil lord, including an old blacksmith called Khan. That hero was Grid. After that, Grid saved Irene who had once again been kidnapped by the Yatan Church, rescued Reinhardt which had been invaded by golems, and saved the 250,000 residents of Pangea on the East Continent. Grid was a person who only lived for others. This was his life.

“I sincerely admire you.” Irene blushed.

“Hum. Hum hum.” Grid sweated and coughed with embarrassment. He felt somewhat uncomfortable every time he saw Irene misunderstanding himself. It made him worry that Irene would one day be disappointed if she knew his real self. Irene buried herself in his chest and whispered, “Please know... I would love you even if you weren’t a hero.”

She realized it when she saw the brilliantly shining sword being eaten by the darkness Grid emitted. Irene would’ve cheered Grid on even if he abandoned herself and Lord to walk down the corrupted path.

“You are the most precious person in the world,” she said in a voice full of conviction.

Grid was filled with joy. “Irene...”

Just like Irene, Grid felt infinite affection when he looked at her. No more long words were necessary. The two of them shared a hot kiss without caring about the gazes of other people. At this moment, the emotions they felt were completely mutual. Of course, they didn’t forget about Lord. The two people both had one hand wrapped around one of Lord’s small hands. This ‘family’ gave the child peace of mind.

“Father. Mother...”

The parents, who loved each other more than anyone else, had a positive impact on Lord. Today, the child had seen and learned many things—the patience to swallow a grudge for the sake of the cause, the loyalty of a retainer and the duty of a ruler, the wisdom of a woman and the love of a mother, the pope’s righteousness and power, his helplessness, and...

‘Father’s strength and...’

Then Lord’s gaze moved to the skeleton standing silently nearby. Several of its ribs were broken, and there was a large crack in its

skull. It was Lich Mumud.

‘...Sadness.’

Was it because Lord was young that he could see the sadness, regret, and hatred in Agnus’ eyes as he looked at Lord and his mother? Additionally, Lord felt that Mumud was lonelier than anyone else. Lord knew that everyone had emotional wounds, just like how his teacher Kasim resented the empire and how his mother feared the Yatan Church.

‘I need to be someone who can help with the wounds.’

This was his path. Lord’s way of thinking was established through this incident. If his father set up a kingdom and was walking the path of a guardian, then Lord’s role would be to assist his father and take care of the missing parts.

‘I will make more people stand by Father in the future.’

Lord believed it. King of Shadows Kasim, Pope Damian, Sword Saint Kraugel, and Farmer Piaro—he believed that with these great teachers, he would become much stronger later on. Lord didn’t doubt that he would overcome today’s helplessness.

‘Stronger, I will also become stronger.’ Someday, he would stand side by side with his father. ‘I have to work harder for Father.’

Normally, the prince watched for an opportunity to weaken the king while the king kept an eye on the prince. It was a sad reality. As history already proved, the relationship between a king and a prince was very different from the relationship between commoner parents and their children. It was like the cruel relationship between an old lion and a young lion. That’s right. The young prince’s pledge to be loyal to the king was a very important event in history.

Grid’s kiss with Irene had finished. Then Grid followed his son’s gaze and his expression distorted like a demon.

‘That bastard is still...!’

He belatedly noticed Lich Mumud standing motionless while gazing at his body. Grid didn't know about the living Mumud, but Lich Mumud had become Agnus' limb. Agnus was a clear enemy, so Lich Mumud was a dangerous enemy that Grid had to watch out for.

"Agnus! Come out!" Grid's shout rang out in the sky of early dawn. He pulled out the Enlightenment Sword and rushed toward Lich Mumud.

"Father! That skeleton isn't the enemy!"

"Your Majesty! That lich helped us!"

Irene and Lord cried out urgently, but Grid was already close to Mumud. Moreover, he also couldn't accept Irene and Lord's claims so easily. Mumud had helped Irene and Lord? It was something that Grid couldn't understand. He thought that Lord and Irene were mistaken. The Enlightenment Sword clashed against the magic shield that Lich Mumud had created. The already damaged walls nearby crumbled from the black flames, but Lich Mumud's shield was complete.

"Where is your master?" Grid gritted his teeth at the thought of Agnus. This person was hiding his body somewhere and laughing at Grid's suffering wife and son!

"..." Lich Mumud didn't respond and stared at Grid with deep eyes. There was no counterattack. It felt like he was ridiculing Grid.

"Agnus!"

Agnus was a crazy person, making this situation dangerous. Despite this, Grid was appalled and upset at the thought that Agnus enjoyed Irene and Lord's suffering. So, Grid's offensive became more powerful. He didn't care about the small amount of stamina he had recovered and continued attacking Mumud. In the meantime, he kept the God Hands, the light elemental, and his pets

beside Lord and Irene, showing how worried he was about them.

“...” As Lich Mumud stood among the storm of sword attacks and explosions, he recalled his life. What had he been doing back when he was the same age as the young prince? He had been an orphan who didn’t know his parents’ faces and had to beg for food. Had he ever tried protecting anyone like the young prince before him had done?

There was one person—his wife whom he’d met in Siren. She had been his only love whom he’d promised to make happy forever.

Clack... Clack clack... Mumud’s jaw moved, and his large cracked skull shook. The sad memories were to blame. There was a teacher who had raised him. Mumud had followed him like a father but was then betrayed. He’d left the wound of betrayal behind him when he met his love, but he became sick with an incurable illness after that.

Clack! Clack clack!

Ahh, yes. Mumud had lived in pain and died. There were people he loved, but it was different from an immediate family. He had found no peace in his life. Death was his rest, and he had hoped the death would last forever.

“Mumud!”

“...”

Yet a voice had pulled him out of death. As if he wasn’t worthy of rest, Mumud had been given a new pain like he was born to suffer. Clack clack! Clack! Mumud’s jaw moved more rapidly.

“Agnus!” Grid’s eyes turned toward Agnus while attacking Mumud. Agnus was a half skeleton, which was the sign of turning into a lich.

Who was he fighting with?

Grid had this question but didn’t think further about it.

“You!” Grid had clearly seen Lich Mumud cast magic in Irene and Lord’s direction. If he hadn’t used Skill Dispel, Irene and Lord might not be in the world right now. “Die!” Grid’s extreme killing intent was directed to Agnus. It happened before Irene and Lord could shout anything.

“Mumud! Why aren’t you killing that bastard? Eh? Kik! Kikikik! Kihahahahat!” Agnus crossed the line first. The silently defending Mumud immediately responded. He hated Agnus but was forced to follow his orders.

“Kuk...!” Grid was about to fly to Agnus only to be struck by magic in his side. It was a sphere of mana that decreased Grid’s health by thousands.

“Asshole!”

“Kuahahahahat!”

The chaos reached the peak. Grid had comforted his family, but then another enemy had appeared. So, he had been unable to confirm his quest rewards. He didn’t even know what he had gotten from killing Aliburn. Agnus was the same. He had succeeded in raiding Silvenas, but he had run to the banquet hall without checking what he had gained. It was because he wanted to make sure the powerless woman was okay.

“Ohhhhhh!”

“Come!”

The shockwave generated by the conflict was incomparable to before. It wasn’t just the already collapsed banquet hall. Even the Vatican was shaken. The residents of the village below the mountain were worried that a landslide could occur.

Chapter 874

There were people who made others feel physically disgusted. Grid was one such person to Agnus. According to one theory, Grid had a past that resembled Agnus'. Grid hadn't experienced something as serious as failing to protect his beloved, which led to her death, killing those responsible, and mourning his lover afterward.

'He also suffered!' Agnus knew that it was difficult to compare the pain that individuals suffered. The bullies who had harassed him and devastated his lover were an example. They had used his palm as an ashtray every morning and laughed at him, but hadn't he endured the pain and turned the pages of his textbook?

Yes, pain was a relative and selfish thing. The pain he suffered couldn't be considered any worse than what Grid had suffered. This was the actual reason why he physically found Grid disgusting.

'I can't understand!' Why didn't Grid spend his life abusing others after what happened to him? 'Why does he look so happy?'

Grid was always with someone—his family, lovers, and friends. They were always smiling while standing with him. This was difficult for Agnus to understand. Had Grid forgotten the days when they were powerless? They were now in a position to trample on people rather than embrace them. People like them had to be alone.

[You have suffered 8,900 damage.]

[Your health is less than 10%. You have used Silvenas' Power that is attached to the Rune of Death. The nature of the dark demonkin who can assimilate with darkness has manifested, hiding your appearance and status.]

[Your contractor Baal is happy.]

-Evil that uses personal beliefs to devour evil. It is the opposite of my former contractor. Once again, I did well in choosing you. How interesting.

[Affinity with 1st Great Demon Baal has risen by 10.]

The notification windows appeared before Angus, but he didn't confirm them. His hateful gaze only chased Grid.

"You're an incompetent person who can't protect your precious people!"

Why wasn't Grid's mind dark like Agnus'? Why didn't he choose to be alone? Why didn't he concentrate on the precious ones he had earned and embrace all the little people? At the very least, Agnus didn't like this. He hated Grid. Agnus had just disappeared from Grid's eyes when there was an explosion of black flames from the Enlightenment Sword.

The splash damage caused new damage to Agnus who was hiding his body.

[You have suffered serious damage!]

[You are in a half-lich state. You have a resistance to death for the duration of this transformation.]

[You have survived!]

It was a gray dawn. Agnus' ribs were cracked as he hid in the shadow of a slanted pillar. He was in danger of losing his balance. This was a crossroad of life and death. It was an urgent battle situation where his head could be blown away at any time. The usual Agnus would be laughing madly, expressing his joy at exhilarating moments that made him forget the awful reality.

However, it was different now. The only emotions that could be seen on Agnus' face were confusion and pain. Agnus wasn't confused over protecting the hateful Grid's family. He had protected them because he projected his dead lover onto them, thus Agnus had no regrets about that.

Rather, the origin of the pain and confusion Agnus was feeling right now was Grid specifically. Why was Grid so different from him? Was Agnus the one who was wrong?

‘No! No!’

“You are wrong!” Agnus’ sword penetrated the darkness and stabbed Grid’s side. It contained a powerful curse which weakened all the resistances that Grid had. In particular, Grid’s dark resistance was completely destroyed.

“Cough!” Grid coughed up blood and was reminded of the notification windows that rose a few minutes ago.

[The goddess of light, Rebecca is awaiting your response.]

[You have once again been given an opportunity to gain great power through the goddess’ blessing.]

[War God Zeratul is feeling satisfied with your choice.]

[War God Zeratul supports the goddess’ affection toward you.]

Like Agnus, Grid had yet to check his notification windows. From the first day they met till this moment, Agnus was always hurting someone. Grid disliked this type of person who could trample on others easily and feel bliss while doing so. Now Grid’s precious family members were sacrifices for Agnus’ joy?

“Crazy jerk!” A desire to kill bubbled up inside Grid. He felt a sense of responsibility to kill Agnus. The killing intent Grid felt toward Agnus was real, and the fighting energy around him became thicker.

“Wave!” Waves of sword energy stretched out around Grid. He was using this wide-area skill to capture Agnus who had suddenly become invisible.

“...There!” Grid detected Agnus. It was when Grid felt that some of the waves were being blocked by something, Then Grid focused and started a sword dance—Pagma’s Swordsmanship, Pinnacle

Kill. The manifestation of the fusion swordsmanship was an obvious mistake though.

“Kuk...!”

Flop! Grid stopped the sword dance as his legs weakened. He had been too agitated that he overlooked the state of his stamina.

[You are on the verge of running out of stamina. You can't use any combat skills.]

“Overgeared... Corn...”

Grid urgently needed to recover his stamina by communicating with his unicorn. It was the first thing he thought of, but how could he communicate with the unicorn during the battle? His enemy wasn't a fool, nor was he dull-headed... especially not the enemy he was dealing with right now!

“Kikikik! Kihahahahat!” Agnus' body was penetrated by Wave, and the darkness was removed. Half of Agnus' body was just a bunch of white bones, but his momentum was fierce as his disheveled hair moved in the wind.

Grid felt a sense of crisis. Now that he'd placed the God Hands, Noe, Randy, the Overgeared Skeletons, and the light elemental in the role of protecting Irene and Lord, there was no one left who could defend him. Moreover, it was hard for him to even move his fingertips.

“Grid!”

With his blurry vision, Grid could see Agnus charging toward him.

“...!!”

“...!!!”

The surroundings were noisy. He could hear the voices of people talking, but the contents didn't enter his ears.

‘Why?’

Would he die like this? No, his opponent was exhausted and on the verge of death. Agnus' use of Lich Transformation could be considered his last resort.

'Maybe he still has his immortality and Bentao's Mockery remaining...'

Grid painfully opened the Rune of Darkness, using Cray's Power which absorbed 100% of the damage done to the target. Determined to maintain his life against Agnus, Grid swung his sword in a basic attack. He still had the effects of the First King title, Tiramet's Power, and his immortality. So, he judged that he could win if he continued fighting.

In the first place, Grid was in a position where he just had to keep enduring. In order to protect Irene and Lord, he absolutely couldn't collapse. Grid pledged this firmly while swinging his sword. Meanwhile, Agnus used an attack skill as he plunged through Grid's basic attack and hit Grid's body.

The two people, who were trying to harm each other, tangled together. Then there was a flash of light. Compared to the past, its strength was now ridiculously weakened, but it was clearly the sword that had hurt Yatan's Third Servant Aliburn.

Grid's and Agnus' eyes turned toward Damian at the same time. Damian had also evolved a step further after regaining the holy sword and preventing the invasion of the Yatan Church. As Grid and Agnus finally started looking around, Damian said to them, "This is a sacred place that serves the will of the goddess. Stop fighting. In the capacity of the pope, I won't allow any further killing."

"Why?" Grid questioned him. Agnus was the enemy. Putting aside personal feelings, he was still Baal's Contractor. He was a person who should be targeted by the Rebecca Church. So, why didn't Damian take the chance to punish Agnus? Grid couldn't understand it.

Damian pointed to Irene, Lord, and Lich Mumud. “Look.”

“...?” Irritated and suspicious, Grid followed Damian’s gaze and was shocked. He witnessed Lich Mumud’s shield floating in front of Irene and Lord. Lich Mumud was protecting Irene and Lord from the aftermath of Grid’s battle with Agnus.

“What...”

Irene and Lord’s shouts came to the mind of the troubled Grid. They had said that he was a good skeleton. Lich Mumud protected them...

‘Their words were true?’

Why though...? Damian watched Grid’s trembling eyes and said carefully, “I understand Grid’s feelings, but... let’s end the fight for today.”

The Rebecca Church saw Baal as an enemy. Baal’s former contractor, Pagma, had tried to defend the Hall of Fame, but ultimately, he still sold his soul to the great demon. The Rebecca Church didn’t regard Pagma as a hero in his later years and thought that the new Baal’s Contractor should be punished.

However, Pope Damian judged that now wasn’t the time for it. “I think it is better to leave each other alone today.”

Damian didn’t know why Agnus had betrayed the Yatan Church and helped them. He wondered about the reason but didn’t dare ask. The most important thing was to rectify the situation. He believed a chance for that conversation would come someday. Still, this reason didn’t seem enough to satisfy Grid. “What are you up to? Why did you protect my family?”

“Ah? What nonsense are you saying? I never did anything like that.”

“Answer seriously!”

“I didn’t know it was your family.”

“...?”

“I just saw a pretty woman and didn’t want her to die. Kikik... I wanted to play with her.”

The duration of Lich Transformation had ended, and only death was waiting for Agnus. He didn’t want to miss this opportunity when he didn’t know if it would come again. This was a great chance for a fight with the Overgeared King Grid while he was unprotected.

“Sigh.” Agnus gave a reason that nobody would believe and swept his hair back. He neatly arranged his hair, exposing his cold golden eyes. “Don’t speak.”

“...?”

“Just fight and kill. Huh? Kik! Kikikik! Kihahahahat!” Agnus broke away from the appearance of politeness and rushed toward Grid. Agnus ignored the pope. Consequently, the Rebecca followers watching quietly couldn’t stay still anymore. Isabel’s spear and the paladins’ sword pierced and stabbed Agnus’ skinny body. Agnus was fully restrained before even reaching Grid.

“Why did you...?” Damian’s lamenting cry rang out, but Agnus didn’t pay any attention to it.

Instead, Agnus’ gaze went back to Irene and Lord who were sad and tearful, before looking at Grid again. “You...”

“...”

“...Become stronger.”

This was the end. Agnus’ body slowly turned to gray after being stabbed by the spear and swords. Mumud followed behind him.

“Skeleton knight...”

‘When will they be saved?’ Lord grew sadder as he saw Agnus’ and Mumud’s sorrow. The red-eyed child tried to hold back his tears.

Then Pope Damian went to talk with the elders. They sent the royalty and the imperial prince away to rest. After that, they started to investigate how they had allowed this invasion to happen and also examine the extent of the damage.

“I saw your struggle. Your Majesty is truly a hero. I was impressed by your moves several times.”

“I’m flattered,” Grid responded passively to 2nd Prince Dulandal’s words and was only able to face the goddess after confirming that Irene and Lord were asleep.

-Hero, bless you.

Chapter 875

He was sleepy. Today had been extremely long and hard. He lay down in his bed and thought his sleeping cap looked like an angel. Grid felt thankful that this beautiful woman was his wife and that this bright child was his son.

“...”

Grid's expression was very dark as he stroked their heads carefully. He was also feeling greatly confused.

‘Agnus, why...?’

Irene's and Lord's claim about Agnus helping to protect them hadn't been their misinterpretation. The Rebecca followers, Overgeared knights, and even Pope Damian testified to it. Everyone spoke unanimously. It was thanks to Agnus that Irene and Lord were safe.

‘Why the hell did he do that?’

According to the testimonies, Agnus was originally helping the Yatan Church but betrayed them to help Irene and Lord. Grid could easily guess how much Agnus had lost with this single choice. Why had Agnus saved Irene and Lord while suffering big losses?

‘A madman who feels pleasure through fighting and trampling on others...’ This was Grid's evaluation of Agnus.

In fact, the Agnus that Grid met was no different from the rumors. He always laughed as he trampled on someone. Yet that madman fought for others? Moreover, they were Grid's wife and son? Grid tried to read Agnus' intentions, but it was impossible. No matter how he thought about it, he couldn't understand why Agnus had sought to protect Irene and Lord.

“...In the first place, isn't it too much to try and understand him?”

Agnus wouldn't be called a madman if he could be understood.

'He is an opponent who is fickle and doesn't think too deeply...'

Indeed, Grid shouldn't waste time and energy on useless things. He shook off his thoughts and decided, 'I just need to protect those important to me. That's enough.'

It was a promise that he had to keep. In any case, he was grateful for Agnus' actions that protected Irene and Lord. It was an unforgettable favor.

"Sigh..."

Irene's and Lord's breathing sounds stabilized Grid. Grid took a deep breath and calmed his mind before looking at the notification windows which were still on one side. He checked the unconfirmed notifications, belatedly remembering that he was in the middle of a quest.

"Ah..."

He had completely forgotten about the quest. It wasn't a game for him today as he had only focused on saving Irene and Lord.

'That's right. I gave up the sword...'

If he hadn't given up the holy sword, he would be a half-god overwhelming the world right now.

"...Hat." Grid let out a scoff. He felt disgusted about the greed that had almost made him give up his family, colleagues, and kingdom.

'However, it is natural to be greedy.'

[Reward for Gaining the Incomplete Holy Sword:

The 'Holy Sword of the 4th Evil' will be acquired.

* Your race will evolve from a human into a half-god. A half-god is a race that transcends humanity and approaches being a god. There will be room for great increases of all abilities.

* The passive skill God's Command is strengthened. The probability of activating God's Command will become 100%. However, a critical hit won't be applied to skills that God's Command is used on.

* The skill 'Corrupted Holy Sword' will open.

* You will be cursed by Goddess Rebecca, God Dominion, God Judar, and God Zeratul.

* Affinity with the Rebecca Church, Dominion Church, and Judar Church will fall to minus values.

* Followers of the Warrior God will chase you.

Reward for Returning the Incomplete Holy Sword:

Goddess Rebecca's blessing. Affinity with the Rebecca Church will rise to the maximum.

* Affinity with the Rebecca Church is already at the maximum.]

This was the reward for the Crossroad of Good and Evil hidden quest. The difference in rewards between giving up the quest and not giving up the quest was too large.

'I know how great the goddess' blessing is.'

He had acquired the Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle skill thanks to the goddess' blessing. Grid was likely to get another four fusion skill with the goddess' blessing. It would become one of the strongest skills he had gained. However, was it better than a 100% chance of activating God's Command? Once God's Command had a 100% chance of activating, Grid would be able to use all the skills twice in succession. He was able to assert that the value of the 100% God's Command was much higher than Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.

'...Well.'

There was no point in regretting now, even if the reward was very low. In the end, he was able to keep everyone safe. Grid controlled his heart and finally responded to the notification

window that said: [The goddess of light, Rebecca, is awaiting your response.]

“Sorry to keep you waiting.”

-Yes, I was waiting. It is very nice to see you care for your family.

“...!!” Grid was astonished by the answer of Goddess Rebecca. He had already heard Goddess Rebecca’s warm voice several times, but this was the first time their conversation was so clear. Wasn’t a ‘divine message’ a one-sided communication? Grid had previously recognized the gods as a part of the system, but he could now establish a new hypothesis.

‘NPC? Is the god an NPC?’

He should’ve noticed it ever since getting the jealousy of the blacksmith god. Clearly, the gods had personalities and had a form somewhere in existence.

‘If one day I meet a god... Ah?’

A chill went down Grid’s spine as he thought about it. The ‘truth’ that he’d heard from the legendary great magician Braham in the past crossed his mind.

‘Once human desires reach the peak, chaos will come to the world. In other words, if Goddess Rebecca no longer controls the world, God Yatan’s destructive instinct will be exercised. God Yatan will emerge to destroy the world, then Goddess Rebecca will once again create a new world. The two opposing gods on the surface are actually cooperating with each other. Great demons, angels, and humans are all playing in the hands of the gods.’

These were Braham’s claims.

‘No, there were no gods in the first place. Yatan? Rebecca? The gods aren’t the omnipotent beings that we think they are. Like machines, they are accessories that exist for the world’s providence. There is no reason to serve their existence or endure their trials.’

They were made like that in the first place. The gods were just accessories of this world. Grid agreed with Braham's claims since he knew that Satisfy was a game. Both Yatan and Rebecca were part of the system Lim Cheolho had created, and they were passive existences that conformed to the will of the world (Lim Cheolho).

However, Grid's thoughts changed once he realized the gods were NPCs. The gods had personalities. They weren't passive presences like what he had expected. Maybe the individual's judgment could go against the system. For example...

[Crossroad of Good and Evil]

[★ Hidden Quest ★]

After all sorts of adventures, you have won the power 'God's Command' that the fourth malignant saint 'Taren' left for later generations.]

The setting of Satisfy, which Lim Cheolho created, stated that this quest is something 'Taren left for later generations.' This was a 'truth.'

'Human, this isn't Taren's arrangement. It is Dominion's and my arrangement. Don't listen to the voice of the corrupted one.' This statement suggested that War God Zeratul's claims might be false. Grid's entire body got goosebumps.

-Thank you again for fighting for the peace of humanity.

Goddess Rebecca's voice was so warm that it felt creepy, yet Grid was blank-faced and didn't show any response.

[The goddess of light, Rebecca, is awaiting your response.]

This notification window floated in front of Grid, forcing him to answer. Grid answered hurriedly, "I just did what I had to."

He thought that the gods weren't evil or part of the system. They were just NPCs with individual personalities.

'Why does it matter?'

They were beings who stayed in the distant sky and were strong allies who gave humans the power to fight against the great demons. Yes, there was no problem. He was just one player, and he didn't need to worry about them.

‘Just...’

It was worrisome that the seven malignant saints might not be evil, unlike what had been known in the past. A group of bright lights enveloped Grid's body while he frowned.

-I will give a gift to the hero who fought hard.

[Rebecca the goddess of light has given you a blessing.]

[The goddess of light, Rebecca, respects you for overcoming the temptation of the seven malignant saints' offer to strengthen the power of God's Command.]

['Skill Enhancement' has been acquired as compensation.]

[Skill Enhancement]

[You can strengthen one skill that you possess.

The power of the skill will rise.

However, this only applies to class-specific skills.]

Class-specific skills—in Grid's case, it meant Pagma's Swordsmanship and his various blacksmithing techniques. He didn't know how the enhancement would be applied, but this was a terrible reward for Grid who wanted an entirely new skill. Grid didn't know about the five fusion skill that Hell Grid used, but he was expecting at least a four fusion skill. Would it just end with the enhancement?

-Full blessings for your heroic future.

It seemed to be the farewell. The goddess's voice became more and more distant. Grid shouted urgently, “Excuse me! Goddess!”

A conversation meant that flexibility was possible!

-What is going on?

As expected, Goddess Rebecca stopped leaving and listened to Grid. Grid spoke in a blunt manner, “Help me fuse more sword skills together!”

A god was truly a god. Goddess Rebecca immediately understood Grid’s meaning and laughed, -Huhut.

Considering her high affinity with Grid, she gave him a very valuable hint, -That is something only you can pioneer now. Isn’t this blessing also supported by War God Zeratul?

“...?”

-It means this blessing is more valuable than previous blessings.

Goddess Rebecca didn’t say anything else. The warm lights that made Irene and Lord smile in their sleep disappeared like they were lies. Then she was gone. Grid was left alone and brought up the list of skills which could be strengthened with Skill Enhancement. All of Pagma’s Swordsmanship and the various blacksmithing skills were stated on the ‘Skills that Can Be Enhanced’ list.

‘I can build fusion skills by myself... What is the method?’

Grid confirmed what the effect would be if he enhanced a single sword dance technique. The first one he checked was Link and the result was amazing.

[Genuine - Link]

[Regardless of attack speed, the number of strikes dealt by Link will be fixed at 40 times per second. The damage is equal to 200% of your attack power.

Link can be connected to another sword dance.

* The enhanced skill is fixed at master level.]

“Ah...” Grid’s face brightened. When he saw this, he no longer regretted missing out on the enhanced God’s Command.

Chapter 876

Good thing about this is that it gets me a little bit further away from the author, thus, there is no point in a mass release once OG comes back up. In addition, keeping the current schedule of 7 chapters a week will end it on a terrible cliffhanger. Thus, I will be doing six chapters this week and six chapters next week.

For those reading who still insist on reading older chapters, please don't read on aggregate/pirate sites. I would prefer you make your own pdf/epub during the two weeks you are given and read it privately, though not spreading them around.

‘Isn’t this a scam?’

40 hits dealing 200% attack power per second...? If he hit a target with all 40 attacks, he would cause 8000% damage in just one second.

‘Of course, if the target isn’t a fool, they will try to dodge or block...’

Grid had the Enlightenment Sword. He might encounter a great player who would dodge more than half of the 40 strikes, but the black flames or red lightning bolts meant he could expect more than 8000% attack power.

‘Who could handle this?’

Except for boss monsters, wouldn’t Grid be able to deal with almost all his enemies in one blow? In particular, players with relatively low health in comparison to monsters wouldn’t be able to afford this attack power.

‘It is possible to beat them in one blow.’

If Grid took into account that Link had the shortest cooldown of one minute among Pagma’s Swordsmanship, it was unquestionably an invincible skill. It was the strongest skill that

would kill an enemy in front of him with every minute!

‘If I connect it with other sword dances immediately afterward...’

It was possible to use all types of two fusion skills by connecting Link -> a single swordsmanship. Then it would eventually be possible to use a five fusion swordsmanship. He was looking forward to the firepower comparable to the Hell Grid who overwhelmed Yura.

‘...A god is a god for a reason.’ Grid was thrilled by Goddess Rebecca’s blessing. It was difficult to imagine how much stronger he would become in the future. However, this joy was short-lived. Grid was disappointed when he confirmed the cooldown time of Genuine Link.

‘The cooldown time is 30 minutes?’

Did he see that wrongly?

“No, it is right?”

‘Dammit!’

How strong was the skill? Could it really be called an upgraded version if the skill with a cooldown of one minute was changed to 30 minutes?

‘This can’t be.’

The biggest advantage of Link was its ability to unleash the black flames through the multiple hits. If Grid was lucky, he would be able to hit the target every minute. There was no big advantage in a skill that had its cooldown increased to 30 minutes. Then Grid determined the changes that would occur with Wave and Restraint. Wave would become stronger, and Restraint would completely ignore all status resistances. However, the cooldown of these two skills would also change to 30 minutes.

“Hah...?”

What about Transcend, Kill, and Revolve?

“The strength increases but...”

Grid’s expression became worse with every skill. The other sword skills also had a fixed cooldown of 30 minutes. Grid eventually couldn’t bear it anymore and jumped up. His wife and son were sleeping, so he let out the curses that had built up inside him, “Damn!! %!*\$!!”

“...!?” The knights guarding the door were disconcerted by Grid’s sudden cursing. In particular, Coke was extremely shocked. Then when Grid discovered the knights belatedly, he coughed. “You have suffered a lot.”

“It isn’t a bother. I am delighted and honored to be in charge of Your Majesty’s defense.”

“...” Grid was amused by Coke’s vigorous attitude. He had no idea of Coke’s saga though. Was it because Irene and Lord had complimented him before...?

“...Thank you.” In the silent corridor, Grid bowed deeply to Coke.

“Y-Your Majesty?” The best person in the world was bowing to him? The confused Coke didn’t know what to do. Grid kept bowing and said, “I’m really grateful that talented people like you have entered the Overgeared Kingdom and that you sacrificed yourself to protect Irene and Lord.”

Grid had heard that Coke was the pinnacle of the second generation 10 Rookies. He knew that there were many options for a talent like Coke. Coke wasn’t a person who chose the Overgeared Kingdom for the mass-produced Grid set, so he must’ve moved to the Overgeared Kingdom because he envied the Overgeared members. The way he protected Irene and Lord with everything he had showed he wasn’t aiming for quest rewards. He had sincerely tried to protect Irene and Lord and was then chosen as Lord’s knight as a result. Grid raised his head and caught Coke’s hand. A big, rough hand wrapped around the knight’s hand.

“I will surely repay you. So, going forward, continue to look after my son.”

Grid never dreamt that Lord’s first knight would be a player. Players were much more fluid than NPCs and there were many variables. This meant Grid had to put in a big effort to maintain Coke’s loyalty.

‘Please continue to protect Lord,’ Grid sent him this message through warm eyes.

“I don’t want a reward,” Coke said with red eyes. “I feel pride and joy every time I see you play an active role in the National Competition or achieve new feats. That alone is enough.”

Coke was a Korean like Grid. He felt genuinely pleased every time Grid elevated their country’s status. His heart heated up, and he had a passion to be like Grid one day. Grid was a great help to Coke just by being present. This was the power of an ‘idol.’ Just as many young people cheered on their athletes during the Olympics and World Cup, Coke dreamed while watching Grid. It was a great joy and honor for him just being able to talk to Grid.

“Ah...” A smile crossed Grid’s face as he read the emotion in Coke’s eyes. He realized that he was the idol of the young man before him. A wind blowing through the half-open window ruffled Grid’s hair. There were many emotions filling the eyes which were covered by the fluttering hair.

‘The talents I never would’ve dared to be envious of now think of me as their idol...’

Grid was happy and proud. A feeling of additional pressure accompanied the pleasant emotions. The burden stemmed from a sense of responsibility toward those who worshipped him.

‘If I shame them or let them down...’ Grid cleared his throat several times.

It was shameful that his double nature was exposed a moment

ago. Coke noticed his embarrassment and grinned. “Two years have passed since I first saw Your Majesty.”

It had been when Coke was living in the fortified city of Patrian. After meeting Grid and Piaro, he had steadily gotten to know Grid’s personality through various media like the TV and the Internet.

“I’m already familiar with your personality.” Yes, Coke knew about Grid and understood. “I know this but I still admire you.”

“...”

“Please relax and act comfortably. I will never be disappointed in you.” Coke gazed at Grid with firm eyes!

As he realized Coke’s unwavering heart, Grid trembled. He hadn’t experienced it until now. It turned out that there were many people like Coke who admired him in the world. However, it would take them a lot of time to reach Grid’s side and stand out. Why? It was because Grid was the sky above the sky. It wasn’t easy for newly emerging talents to reach the high Grid.

-Grid. The thrilled Grid received someone’s whisper. It was from Pope Damian. -If you aren’t busy, can you give me a moment?

Had something happened? Anyway, it was fine.

-Yes.

Grid moved to the gardens of the Vatican. As Grid left, Coke bowed and maintained his position. Coke had defended Irene and Lord and gained the title of Protector. He was becoming stronger just staying by his master’s side.

“Damian, there is something I want to ask you,” Grid said as he found Damian waiting in the gardens. Rebecca, the goddess of light, might be an NPC and not unconditionally good, unlike what people perceived. What did Grid think about this? It was a heavy

and complex subject. In any case, the gods were too far away and Grid had other things in front of him.

“Did you receive the goddess’ blessing as a quest reward?”

“Yes, I was blessed with this quest reward.”

“Ah, is that so? I’m glad. Did you receive a blessing called Skill Enhancement?”

“Skill Enhancement...? No, nothing like that. I receive a new skill every time I get a blessing. I never got a chance to enhance my skills. Why are you asking?”

“Why...” Grid started to explain to the interested Damian. Damian was a trustworthy person on the level of the Overgeared members, so Grid confessed everything he knew. “That is the conclusion.”

Damian listened to Grid’s complaints and summarized the situation, “You’re saying that the cooldown time of the enhanced skill is fixed at 30 minutes?”

“That’s right. Can this really be called enhancement? Does it matter if the power increased if I can’t use it often?”

“Certainly. It is fair to call it a type of buff.”

“Yes. How is this a blessing? Isn’t this too much?”

To think that the reward of a god was this stingy...? Damian spoke cautiously to the grim Grid, “What about skills with a cooldown of over 30 minutes?”

“Huh?”

“For example, will a skill with a cooldown of one hour change to 30 minutes if it is enhanced? If so, wouldn’t it be considered enhanced?”

“Ah...?”

‘Perhaps?’

Surprised, Grid thought about Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle. This was the strongest skill that Grid had with a cooldown of three hours. It was an ultimate skill that could only be used once in battle as long as God's Command didn't activate. What if he enhanced this skill? Grid didn't delay. He opened the list of skills that could be enhanced and looked at Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.

[Genuine - Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle]

[Four types of sword techniques are connected.

2,000% of your attack power will be dealt to the target due to Linked Kill.

If the target is hit at least twice, the damage of Linked Kill will increase by 300%, and Wave will be summoned.

Wave will affect any enemy within a range of five meters. It will deal 750% of your attack power, and all targets hit will have all speeds decreased by 80% for 30 seconds. Additionally, there will be definite damage from the Pinnacle that follows.

Pinnacle ignores 88% of the target's defense and deals 2,300% of your attack power as physical damage.

You can connect another sword technique immediately after Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle.

* This skill doesn't share a cooldown with Link, Kill, Wave, Pinnacle, or Linked Kill.

* The enhanced skill is fixed at master level.

Skill Mana Consumption: Half of the maximum mana.

Skill Cooldown Time: 30 minutes.]

'This is great!' Grid's body shook as he confirmed the information of Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle. Damian noticed that things had worked out and smiled. A fusion skill consisting of five sword dances? How funny. Grid was looking forward to fusing six sword dances.

Chapter 877

‘I can use Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle more often!’

Then perhaps Grid could link up to six sword techniques!

‘Will a completely new sword technique like Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle be born?’

If he used Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle and another skill in sequence, perhaps a new skill called Transcended Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle could be expressed as a true fusion skill.

“Umm.” Yet Grid felt uncomfortable.

After all, didn’t the four fusion sword dance show a power that caused a backlash among the gods? Additionally, the five fusion sword dance had caused Yura to die in one blow. So, it was obvious that the six fusion sword dance would obviously show off an extreme power.

It was at this point that Grid had a question. Would the system even recognize a six sword fusion sword dance? Would the S.A Group allow the six fusion sword dance to exist at all due to wanting to maintain the balance?

‘How uncomfortable.’

Grid reminded himself that it was rare for expectations to become reality. That’s right. Most of the benefits Grid had gotten so far had been products of ‘chance.’ It was rare for him to gain things intentionally. Nonetheless, these chances were the result of effort, of course.

‘...No, let’s not worry too much. I don’t even know if a six fusion sword dance exists.’

A five fusion sword dance certainly existed. The clone had proved its existence.

‘I should be able to make a five fusion sword dance. Then I’ll be

much stronger than I am now.'

Furthermore, there was the extremely tempting performance of the enhanced Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle. In particular, the cooldown time going from three hours to 30 minutes was a big attraction.

'Honestly, a cooldown time of three hours is too long.'

Even if he wanted to keep it as a trump card, he couldn't use it at the usual hunting grounds. How could it be an ultimate skill with a cooldown time of three hours? What ultimate technique had the penalty of such a long cooldown time?

'The cooldown time for an attack skill should be shorter.'

It was truly right to enhance Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle. Grid made a decision only to suddenly feel doubtful.

'No, do I need to use it on an attack skill?'

Pagma's Descendant was a blacksmith, so enhancing the blacksmithing side could be better.

'Who knows? Perhaps the probability of making myth rated items will rise?'

The greatest strength of Pagma's Descendant was that he could wear all items! Grid imagined himself wearing all myth rated items.

'What if I had a helmet, armor, shoes, gloves, a cloak, and a crown like the Enlightenment Sword?'

Wouldn't he be much stronger even without the five fusion skill?

'Overgeared...'

Yes, the core of a game was items. A skill? In the end, it was below items. The stronger the items, the stronger the skill. The stronger the item, the less damage he received when he was hit by a skill! Grid thought about it and confirmed what would happen if he enhanced the Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill.

[Genuine - (Seeing the Gods' Techniques) Legendary Blacksmith's Craftsmanship Skill Lv. 8]

[The production button is now enabled. and the time it takes to make an item has been greatly reduced.

A minimum of epic rated items will be produced. There is a somewhat high probability of producing unique rated items. There is a certain probability of producing legendary rated items. If certain conditions are met, there is a rare probability of making a myth reproduction or myth rated item.

- * All stats of a production item will increase by 30%.

- * When myth rated items are produced, all stats will permanently rise by +20 and reputation throughout the continent will rise by +1,000.

- * Something special will occur with every three myth rated items created. (Currently 2/3)

- * The enhanced skill is fixed at master level.]

“Hah?” Grid was speechless. The production button was activated! Like ordinary blacksmiths, he would be able to create items automatically and the time it took to make items was significantly reduced. The items he created would have a minimum of an ‘epic’ rating! It meant he didn’t have to worry about normal or rare rated items appearing in the future!

‘The probability of making unique, legendary, and myth rated items also increased!’

This wasn’t the end though. Originally, the stats of any items Grid produced would increase by 21%. That alone was tremendous. If a normal longsword dealt 100 damage, the longsword produced by Grid would deal 21 more damage, meaning it could be treated as a higher-rated item. Now, the enhancement blacksmithing skill would increase the stats of all items Grid made by 30%. If he produced a weapon with 2,000 attack power, he would get an

additional 600 attack power.

‘Furthermore, every time I make a myth rated item, all stats will increase by 20 instead of 10...!’

Grid’s eyes shook as he gulped. Should he enhance Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle or blacksmithing? It wasn’t easy to decide.

‘Maybe I don’t need to consider this so seriously...’

Through this incident, Grid once again realized that there was a clear limit to the power of an individual. What could he do by becoming stronger alone? Ultimately he was only one body. He wasn’t Hong Gildong, and he couldn’t save everyone. Enhancing the blacksmithing skill and using it to strengthen his colleagues and subordinates would be a much greater help in the future.

‘It is certain. There are many advantages to enhancing blacksmithing.’

Moreover, enhancing the blacksmithing skill didn’t mean that Grid himself would weaken. Grid would also become stronger if his items were enhanced.

‘There just isn’t as dramatic an increase in strength compared to enhancing the sword dance. It also requires a considerable amount of time and luck...’

Grid frowned as he stood at the crossroads of choice. His face would never be extremely handsome due to his high nose and angular jaw, but lately, he was looking more mature than he should at his age. The greater his strength and the higher his position, the more things he needed to protect and worry about.

“Ah, I’m sorry. Why did you ask to meet me?”

How much time had passed by? Grid had been thinking for a long time when he was reminded of Damian beside him. Damian watched Grid with an awkward smile and bowed his head. “First, I want to say thank you.”

Without Grid's help, Damian wouldn't have been able to clear the Vatican quest so smoothly. He guessed that it was a quest that could surely be cleared even without Grid, but he was grateful for Grid's help in making Irene and Lord safe. Irene and Lord would've been in danger if Grid hadn't come. Damian didn't want to think about it. Irene's and Lord's death would have a huge negative effect on Grid. He wondered how Satisfy would be ruined by Grid's rampage if they had died.

Moreover, how sad would Damian be at the death of his cute and loving student, Lord? Damian's chest throbbed just thinking about it. Then he said, "I actually have a problem."

"A problem?"

What problem was there when all the Yatan members had been killed or captured? Damian handed a shining sword over to Grid. It was a sword covered in a gold color—the first holy sword.

"Ah...!" Grid couldn't help exclaiming. Amazingly, he couldn't tell what the holy sword was made of even with Pagma's knowledge. It wasn't gold, adamantium, or even pavranium. If he looked closely, it seemed like glass, and there was a clear sound when he hit it. It felt like a metal that could break easily, but Grid had witnessed the power of the sword firsthand. He already knew that this unknown golden substance was hard and sharp, unlike the surface features.

"What's wrong with it? Ah!" Grid belatedly noticed the problem. There were small grey spots all over the holy sword. He rubbed the surface of the grey spots and found a rough surface. It was stone—a sign of petrification.

Damian explained, "The curse of the original sin is affecting the sword again. If this continues, the holy sword will be sealed in the Stone of Original Sin and the divine power will be lost."

"What is the Stone of Original Sin?"

“It is said to be the curse of the seven malignant saints who tried to bring the gods down to Earth and become new gods. The curse has the ability to neutralize ‘all types of divine power.’ It is a corrupted power that denies the gods.”

“Hrmm.”

Was it really appropriate to call it a corrupted power? Grid was already suspicious of the relationship between the gods and the seven malignant saints, so he couldn’t accept it easily. However, he didn’t express this. Pope Damian had absolute trust in Goddess Rebecca. Grid didn’t want to question him in front of Goddess Rebecca and cause doubts or confusion.

‘I don’t have any certainty yet. Now isn’t the time.’

Damian had the position of pope, and Grid was the one who cast him in this role. He couldn’t create any confusion without clear evidence. Grid barely held back the doubting words that rose in his throat. Then Damian said, “I received a divine message from the goddess.”

“...?”

Damian handed the sword to Grid. “Please make the first holy sword complete.”

Ttiring~

[The new quest ‘Cleanse the First Holy Sword’ has been created.]

[Cleanse the First Holy Sword]

[Difficulty: Class quest.

Your blacksmithing skills have already reached the level of a god.
Prove it to the gods!

Your blacksmithing skills are now comparable to Pagma!

Completely cleanse the First Holy Sword and escape from his shadow!

Quest Clear Conditions: Cleanse the First Holy Sword

Quest Clear Reward: Unlock a new Pagma story and a new Pagma's Swordsmanship technique. The goddess' blessing.]

“...!?” Grid's breathing was blocked suddenly. What was this new class quest? This was a chance to learn a new Pagma story and get a new swordsmanship technique! It had been a few years since he had gotten a new sword dance.

Duguen! Duguen! Duguen!

Grid's eyes shone like lanterns, and his heart beat faster. He was very excited about the goddess' blessing on the rewards list.

‘I might be able to enhance both Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle and blacksmithing!’

(“Is the light so bright that you have to close your eyes? A half-god isn't any better than a blind man.”

A bitter smile spread on the face of the mocking Clown King. The Clown King sympathized with the seven good people.)

“...” The young man was calm as he stared at the writing on the slab.

However, the middle-aged man standing by his side was extremely confused. “C-Clown? Seven good people? What type of sophistry was this? Yes, it's clearly just manipulation! It is a wicked trick of the seven malignant people to get between future generations and the gods!”

Kusar was a pilgrim who traveled all over the continent to understand the true nature of the gods. The writing on the slab was completely different from what he knew about the story of the Clown King and the seven malignant people. This slab was definitely wrong. It was a big problem since the person who wrote about the time of the Clown King marked the seven malignant

saints as good people.

“Put that stone slab down! The great demon is laughing at us while hiding somewhere!” Kusar fiercely denied it and turned away from the stone.

‘...This is it.’ The black-haired Kraugel gazed at the slab without being disturbed by the truth. He sensed it. ‘Grid, Haster, Agnus... and me... Sooner or later, everyone will be together in one place.’

Some people would try to do good while others would remain evil.

“...” The illusion of a wing flickering back and forth between white and black appeared on Kraugel’s back.

Grid, Agnus, and Haster had all succeeded in acquiring one of the seven malignant saints’ skills. The freaked out Kusar exclaimed, “You are a great demon...!!”

“No, we don’t know that yet.”

Chapter 878

‘How do I cleanse it?’

Grid felt troubled as he held the holy sword, but he showed no signs of great anxiety. He believed he would naturally figure out the method to cleanse it during the process of doing the quest.

‘It is likely done by using the Goddess’ Tears.’

Just like the Yatan Church had the Yatan Essence, the Rebecca Church had the Goddess’ Tears. If the Yatan Essence was a universal poison, then the Goddess’ Tears was a powerful remedy. Grid had experience with the Goddess’ Tears and was confident that he could use them properly. The difficulty of this quest wouldn’t be high.

‘It isn’t arrogance.’

The class quests of Pagma’s Descendant had something in common every time. The process of acquiring a class quest was very difficult, but the difficulty of the class quest itself wasn’t very high. Grid had on a bright expression as he was reminded of the previous class quests.

“Okay. I’ll start right now.”

He would surely cleanse the holy sword. The new sword dance and goddess’ blessing alleviated some of his regret about missing out on being a half-god. Despite this, Damian poured cold water on the motivated Grid. No, he calmed Grid down. He said, “Not today.”

“Why?”

“The royal families of different countries are still staying in the Vatican. They will leave tomorrow afternoon, so you can start then.”

“Hrmm.”

It was a good suggestion. Grid's main job was to be a blacksmith, so he would naturally proceed with the cleansing in a smithy. What if the sound of hammering started coming from the Vatican's smithy? Someone would certainly be interested, and rumors that the Overgeared King was working there would spread to all parties present.

‘I can't show future enemies what I'm working on...’

After all, Grid wouldn't be paying attention to his surroundings and might expose something. It would be troublesome in many ways.

“That would be good.” Grid nodded and checked how long he had been connected. He received the notification that he had been logged in for 14 hours today.

‘It is better to rest.’

It was the right time to control his daily connection limit and take care of various physiological needs. Grid decided to log out until Irene and Lord woke up. Then he shifted his gaze to the moonlight, and someone was revealed to be present in an area where the moonlight didn't illuminate. It was Mercedes. She had only been able to run toward Grid once Aliburn died and the barrier was lifted. Since then, Mercedes had been guarding Grid for several hours already.

“I will be taking a break. Look after the queen and prince while I am gone.”

“Yes,” Mercedes responded with no unnecessary remarks.

“...”

Pope Damian was enraptured by the sight of Mercedes. Her white hair and pale skin in the moonlight were enough to make her seem like a translucent beauty. She was reminiscent of a ‘yukionna’ who appeared in Japanese legends. Mercedes had a cool and unrealistic type of beauty.

“She is a person, right?” Damian asked with a bemused face.

“Don’t get distracted. Don’t you have Isabel?” Grid scolded him.

Damian waved his hand. “Of course. I am purely impressed by her beauty. I’ve got no dark thoughts. It’s just...”

“Just what?”

“...I am worried that you will get more anti-fans.”

“Why?”

“No, it is just all the women around you...”

There were Yura and Jishuka in real life, his wife Irene, and now Mercedes. Why were there only beautiful women beside Grid? Even Damian, an ardent fan of Grid, was a bit jealous. For those who disliked or felt antipathy toward Grid, they might feel an anger beyond jealousy.

Grid understood the meaning and sighed. ‘Why would they be jealous of me?’

In any case, he was single in real life. Grid didn’t want to talk about it. He was ashamed about never having been in a relationship despite being almost 30.

It was noon. Pope Damian arranged a meal for all the VIPs who would’ve been tired last night.

Mercedes accompanied Queen Irene and Prince Lord to the dining room.

“I heard that you were deprived of your knight’s qualification by His Majesty the Emperor, but I didn’t realize we would be reunited in this form.” The 2nd imperial prince Dulandal appeared and blocked the Overgeared party. He was very interested in Mercedes.

“It is good to see you, Your Highness.”

“You are more beautiful than yesterday,” Dulandal responded to

Irene's greeting before turning back to Mercedes again. "The strength that you practiced to defend the imperial family... The strength that you gained from being loyal to the imperial family, it's now being used for the sake of another royal family? It is a contradictory result. This is absurd."

"..." Mercedes didn't refute any of Dulandal's sarcastic words. She understood Dulandal's anger. The reason why she was strong was due to the support of the imperial family, not just her innate talents. Despite her having already paid them back with her merits, Mercedes was obviously a traitor from Dulandal's point of view. The dog they'd raised with great care was now guarding another house.

"His Majesty mercifully gave you freedom. Still, if you have any loyalty or conscience left, shouldn't you have stayed deep in the mountains? A woman who immediately wags her tail for another owner has no principles."

The atmosphere was getting worse. Dulandal was clearly showing an example. This mocking in front of Queen Irene and Prince Lord was nothing less than mocking the Overgeared Kingdom itself. In the end, Chucksley couldn't stand it and stepped forward. Yet before Chucksley could speak, a red knight came forward. "It is a luxury to even pay attention to an ungrateful person who has forgotten the virtues of the imperial family."

The 9th knight, Susan, was newly appointed by the emperor, who lost his prejudices against the Red Knights after so many knights died and Mercedes left the empire. Her appearance startled Mercedes because Susan was Mercedes' cousin. It was rumored that she was a genius, but she had only just come of age. So how did she end up guarding the imperial prince?

'What happened in just a few months?'

As he read the questions in Mercedes' eyes, Prince Dulandal smiled coldly. "His Majesty, who couldn't believe in the Red

Knights after Piaro's betrayal, has started to use the Red Knights again."

"..."

The imperial prince knew that Piaro hadn't betrayed them and that it had actually been the plot of Great Demon Astaroth. The emperor had shed tears of remorse after finding out the truth.

'...Prince Dulandal still hasn't received the emperor's confidence.'

He was lacking in every aspect compared to the 1st prince and 4th prince. It was rumored that the emperor's evaluation of 2nd Prince Dulandal was ruthless and cold. Yet Dulandal was now talking proudly. "His Majesty has decided to reorganize the Red Knights into the strongest knights division on the continent, and the grandmaster is actively cooperating. It is completely different from the previous generation of Red Knights and your generation. Their loyalty and force will be better."

'Grandmaster...!' Mercedes' eyes widened.

Grandmaster Zikfrector—according to one theory, he was a strange character that existed in the history of the empire 100 years ago. He was a mysterious person who mastered swordsmanship, magic, and summoning, and he was an opponent that Juander feared. It was rumored that even the emperor couldn't control him...

'He will cooperate directly with training the Red Knights?' A chill went down Mercedes' spine. She thought of Zikfrector's eyes which always seemed to dissect her.

"..." Mercedes' trembling eyes looked at her cousin Susan. Was Susan able to become a Red Knight at this age because she had some relationship with the grandmaster? Mercedes was concerned. In spite of this, Susan, a beautiful woman who resembled Mercedes, smiled. "The grandmaster told me

something.”

“...?”

“I will receive a mission as soon as the truce with the Overgeared Kingdom ends. It is to seize the loot from the Astaroth raid from you. I’m looking forward to going against the genius.”

“...!!” Mercedes and the members of the Overgeared Kingdom were shocked. They didn’t know exactly what was meant by Astaroth’s loot, but Susan’s statement was clear. The empire would become hostile to the Overgeared Kingdom as soon as the truce was over. Of course, they had been prepared, but...

‘Daring to say this in front of the queen and the prince!’

Chucksley and the young knights of the Overgeared Kingdom could no longer overlook the behavior of the imperial prince and the Red Knights. In particular, Coke was furious. He couldn’t forgive their behavior of despising the kingdom that Grid had built. Susan read Coke’s killing intent and scoffed, “A nobody.”

Coke’s face turned red.

“It is up to here.” A black-haired man with fierce eyes appeared. It was Grid. He came toward the group and first kissed Irene and Lord on the cheek, without giving even a nod toward Prince Dulandal. Grid was clearly ignoring Dulandal and the Red Knights, causing them to frown. Then Grid bared his white teeth. “I am looking forward to the expression you will show me when the truce is over.”

“This rudeness!”

“Who are you? Talking like this to the great bloodline that has reigned for hundreds of years!”

The Red Knights immediately became furious while Dulandal remained silent. The imperial prince was interested. He wanted to see how high the great Hero King evaluated himself.

‘I can’t deny that he was great when fighting against the Yatan Servants. He is no less than Mercedes. As expected from someone who set up a new kingdom through force alone.’

However, what could he do alone? If the prince compared the power of the Overgeared Kingdom and the empire, only a few people in the Overgeared Kingdom had a strength great enough to resist the empire. The empire’s overall power was completely dominating. How could the Overgeared King go against the empire that dominated the continent? Didn’t he have the power of an individual at best? If so...

‘He is a flying bird who can’t grasp his enemy. Unlike His Majesty’s concern, the Overgeared King isn’t someone to be wary of.’

He was an inconsequential opponent who could be easily trampled on.

Then Grid said ridiculous words to Prince Dulandal, “The new Red Knights? This young knight will shatter all of them alone.”

“...?” The prince and Red Knights were stunned. Grid was pointing to Coke who had just been called a nobody by Susan.

“Hah?” Susan was dumbfounded by the absurd words. Her reaction was natural. After all, Coke’s level was lower than everyone else, and it was impossible for the NPCs not to know this. During the Yatan fight, Coke had been weaker than the young prince, yet he was going to beat all the Red Knights?

‘Why is he saying nonsense like this?’

Dulandal and the Red Knights had serious doubts.

“I’m looking forward to it. On the day that the truce ends and the empire aims a sword at us, my words will become reality.”

Making the weak stronger—that was the power of items. Grid, who intended to use the goddess’ blessing to enhance the Legendary Blacksmith’s Craftsmanship Skill, whispered to Coke,

“Don’t be scared. There is still plenty of time. I will show you what it really means to be overgeared.”

The Saharan Empire was a huge nation. One city in the empire was equal to the full size of the Overgeared Kingdom. It was impossible to control all the people with the imperial family alone. Yes, Grid had already been preparing. He thought that the empire would threaten them when the truce ended or even before the truce ended, regardless of the emperor’s will. Grid needed to train talents to prepare for that time.

‘After clearing this quest, I will show a true overgeared army.’

‘The target is too high. His Majesty is making a mistake.’

While Grid and Dulandal were having a staring contest, someone was feeling tense. Coke felt like he was sitting on a thorny cushion.

Chapter 879

Coke felt like he was sitting on a thorny cushion.

‘Am I misunderstanding something?’

On the day that the truce ended, this young knight would knock down all the Red Knights of the empire, and the young knight that Grid was pointing to was Coke. Coke had the lowest level among the people gathered here, so it was ridiculous.

‘Is he pointing at Royman instead of me? Yes, I misunderstood!’ Coke didn’t accept reality and looked at Royman on his left.

Yet, Royman was staring at Coke. The same was true for the other knights behind her. Everyone was looking at Coke.

‘No, it’s right?’ Coke’s panicked eyes shook. ‘I’m going to destroy the Red Knights?’

How...? What was this?

‘Ah...!’ It was naive of him to take this practical joke seriously. Grid lay a hand on the confused Coke’s shoulders just as he was thinking this was a joke. “Don’t be scared. There is still plenty of time. I will show you what it really means to be overgeared.”

“...”

Grid was serious. Coke was able to realize it since he had been steadfastly watching Grid as his fan. A fierce will shone in Grid’s eyes. It was a willpower he showed every time he spoke true words.

‘Does he really think I can go against the Red Knights?’

Coke was well aware of the power of the items that Grid showed but...

As his thoughts became complicated, Coke gulped.

He was happy that Grid trusted him, but he felt anxious that he

couldn't live up to Grid's trust. Coke thought he was a failure before it even happened.

"How interesting," Dulandal's derisive voice entered Coke's ears. Dulandal was laughing at Grid's bluff. "I didn't think there would be a person who would act so vainly before me... Interesting. It's really pleasant. Is your occupation actually a clown?"

The prince's mocking gaze moved from Grid to Coke. "The innocent lamb is already trembling with fear. Kukuk! Is this a cattle being taken to the slaughterhouse?"

The imperial prince wasn't wary of Coke at all, treating him as a total nobody.

All the Red Knights were going to be defeated by this guy...? It was something that the imperial prince couldn't imagine.

"..." Coke stayed silent.

After all, the imperial prince's assessment was accurate. Coke was the peak of the second generation rookies and a player with exceptional talent, but that was all. He wasn't at a level comparable to the strongest Red Knights on the continent. In fact, weren't the high rankers who started the game a year earlier than him afraid of the Red Knights?

'I will only be able to defeat a Red Knight after a few years.'

So, why did Grid trust him? Coke was full of doubts.

"It might seem funny now, but won't it be different once he is overgeared?" Grid maintained his confident answer.

'Ah!' Coke belatedly realized it wasn't that Grid trusted Coke. It was that Grid trusted his items. 'He has the confidence to create the best knight!'

This was a confidence that only a legendary blacksmith could have! Duguen! Duguen! The anxiety dominating Coke's mind was lifted, and expectations filled its place. Coke was curious. How

much could he grow when armed with Grid's items, and could he really defeat the Red Knights?

“Overgeared...? You are talking nonsense. Well, this is just a conversation. Empty talk is a waste of time.” Prince Dulandal had an unpleasant expression on his face.

Tsk! He clicked his tongue and warned as he turned his back to Grid's party, “You better keep one thing in mind. Next time we meet and you omit honorifics, I will cut off your head immediately.”

The blood of the imperial prince was great, and he should be respected by everyone on the continent as a king above kings. To Prince Dulandal, Grid's rudeness was an unforgettable insult. However, the reason he hadn't immediately cut off Grid's head was due to the emperor's truce. No matter what sin Grid committed, the prince couldn't ignore the truce that the emperor created. It would be a rebellion against the emperor!

‘Hut... Today's patience will flow to His Majesty, and my position will rise.’

“Hrmm.” Dulandal evaluated his patience highly and left while smiling with satisfaction. Grid watched Dulandal's back with a relaxed gaze. He was feeling relieved.

‘I thought an imperial prince would be a big shot, but he is ordinary.’

The prince was a type of person that Grid had often met. Grid judged the prince as being strong enough to stimulate his fighting energy, but that was the only thing Grid had to be wary about. He didn't have the daunting feeling that Grid had felt from the emperor.

‘He is lacking compared to his father. I hope the other imperial princes are the same...’ Grid prayed sincerely.

He was anxious that if the emperor's successor showed excellent

skills, it would become ever harder to cope with the empire.

“Your Majesty...” Mercedes confirmed that the imperial prince had completely disappeared from view and began to speak. She was very worried. “I heard about Sir Coke’s actions last night. He is promising, but his talent isn’t fully proven. It is too early to declare that Coke will defeat the Red Knights.”

Of course, Mercedes knew what Grid was capable of. Considering the performance of the sword and armor that Grid had given her, there was room for the young knight to be stronger than she thought. However, the difference between the two couldn’t be easily overcome. The Red Knights were geniuses selected from among tens of thousands of nobles and were granted the swordsmanship that had dominated the continent for hundreds of years. They were also given the strength of the red energy, giving them the pride of the strongest. It might seem useless from Grid’s point of view, but Coke wasn’t Grid.

‘Furthermore, the new Red Knights will receive the great powers of the grandmaster.’

Mercedes knew that Susan was very clever and that her confidence wasn’t unfounded.

“Don’t worry too much. By the way, what is a grandmaster?”

“...” Mercedes looked at Grid with a strange expression. He was a person who had used the power of an individual to build a new kingdom, become a hero, and gotten recognized by even the emperor. Grid was certainly great. That’s why Mercedes was even more worried. She wondered if Grid had lost touch with reality due to being carried away by his greatness. Mercedes failed to conceal the frosty shadow on her face as she replied, “The grandmaster is a great person who has mastered several martial arts, magic, and academics.”

“He has mastered martial arts, magic, and academics?”

Mercedes' answer surprised Grid.

‘In the end, it means that he is good at everything? A jack of all trades?’

A jack of all trades was familiar to Grid. It was because Grid was a typical jack of all trades himself. He knew blacksmithing, swordsmanship, magic, tailoring, and so on. Grid could do much more than a normal player.

‘However, the depth is shallow.’

He was exceptional with blacksmithing, but what about swordsmanship, magic, and tailoring?

‘My swordsmanship can’t escape the limits of a sword dance, and I’m often caught by how long it takes to use.’

Meanwhile, magic was difficult to use because of his low intelligence.

‘If I have to throw away the sword, I can arm myself with Belial’s Staff...’

He was able to bring down so many mighty enemies because he possessed a variety of items, titles, and fraudulent skills. Yet his tailoring was still at the intermediate level. Ultimately, he could never be afraid of a jack of all trades! This was Grid’s evaluation.

‘Like me, the grandmaster is outstanding in one field, but he isn’t an all-rounder like the world assumes.’

“To be honest, I don’t use the word ‘mastered’ for nothing. The grandmaster is outstanding in all areas. You should never take him lightly,” Mercedes warned him.

Grid frowned. “What exactly do you mean by outstanding in all areas? Can he use a sword better than a Sword Saint or use magic better than a great magician? And is he smarter than a sage?”

“Yes.”

“Eh?”

“There is no Sword Saint or great magician in our time who can reach the feet of the grandmaster. Since the grandmaster can freely enter and leave the imperial library, he is likely to boast more knowledge than Sage Sticks.”

“What...”

It hadn't been long since Kraugel became a Sword Saint. In particular, the limitations of a player meant he was weaker than the previous Sword Saint. The situation was similar for the great magicians. There were no legends among the current great magicians. It was understandable to some extent that the grandmaster was stronger than them. However, Grid couldn't acknowledge that the grandmaster boasted more knowledge than Sage Sticks.

Mercedes said, “If the grandmaster had been watching the events in the empire, I assure you that all of Great Demon Astaroth's tricks would've been blocked in advance. Additionally, if the grandmaster had been in the imperial palace on the day Astaroth revealed his identity...”

“If he had been there...?”

“Astaroth would've disappeared as a handful of ashes before he could summon the Storm Demonic Energy Field.”

It was due to their absolute trust in the grandmaster that the imperial princes weren't afraid of great demons and legends. There had been a day when the Magic King said, “The Undefeated King was the only one who was able to fight the grandmaster. The moment the grandmaster reveals himself to the world and is stamped into history, a new legend will be born.”

“...” Grid was silent for a long time after hearing Mercedes' explanation.

Mercedes saw that Grid was finally alert. “You can't make fun of the new Red Knights who are being trained by the grandmaster

himself.”

Grid was silent for a while before shrugging. “Mercedes, you are mistaken about one thing.”

“I am mistaken?”

“Yes. I’m not making fun of the Red Knights.” It was natural. The Red Knights had been raised by the legendary knight Mercedes, and now they were stronger than before. “I just want to say that my items are better.”

“...?”

“I’ve been waiting, Overgeared King.”

As they were talking, the group arrived at the banquet hall. Grid followed the elders’ instructions and saw that in front of them was a table of delicacies across from the imperial prince. Prince Dulandal had a very unpleasant expression. He couldn’t understand the elders’ actions of treating Grid so well.

‘What am I? I am a blacksmith.’

The various titles such as Hero King, Great Magician, and First King were all secondary. Grid hoped this boring lunch would end soon. He wanted to hold a hammer in his hand and cleanse the sword. That evening...

“Are you ready?”

“Yes.”

All of the royalty, including the imperial prince, left the Vatican. Then Grid headed to a small smithy in a corner of the Vatican. The holy sword had lost more light compared to when Damian showed it this morning. The speed of the petrification brought on by the Stone of Original Sin was very fast.

“Item Disassembly!”

Grid had to first raise his understanding of the holy sword to 100%. Despite the holy sword breaking down in front of his eyes,

Damian didn't feel uneasy. He just believed in Grid!

Chapter 880

There was a concept of understanding items. He could get up to 100% understanding by observing, using, disassembling, and assembling an item. Once he succeeded in acquiring 100% understanding, he could gain the method to make the item.

“Item Disassembly!”

Grid intended to increase his understanding before cleansing the holy sword. The more he understood the holy sword, the easier the cleansing process would be.

‘It might not be possible to raise my understanding to 100%.’

Why? Wasn’t this holy sword the symbol of Rebecca—the goddess of light—and the pride of the supreme religion on the continent? It was exceptional among myth rated items, so was it impossible to raise the understanding of this item with a human’s ability? No, all myth rated items were equally special. The performance might vary, but there was no arguing about the ‘meaning’ of a myth rated item. The reason why Grid thought it would be difficult to raise his understanding to 100% was that the holy sword was a quest item.

[First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified]

[Rating: Myth]

The first holy sword of humanity. It was sealed by the Stone of Original Sin, but Pagma’s Descendant—Grid—has temporarily unsealed it.

It still isn’t completely free from the curse.

The Stone of Original Sin is encroaching back on it.]

At the time of the Crossroad of Good and Evil hidden quest, the name of the holy sword had still been Sword Stuck in the Stone. Information, such as details about the attack power, durability,

and the options, hadn't been shown at all. It had only been a brief description. When he saw Damian deal a serious injury to Aliburn in a single blow, Grid had gotten convinced that...

'The holy sword is a quest item. It can't be used as a normal item.'

Quest items were items which didn't have any special function apart from in special moments. After all, it didn't make sense to mass-produce items made for specific quests.

'In order to preserve its symbolic value, the system would prevent a 100% understanding.'

However, it could go up to 99.9%. Grid couldn't learn how to make the item, but he could fully grasp the item's hidden functions and intentions.

'Just this much will give me a glimpse of how to cleanse it.'

First, he had to see how the curse had eroded the sword. As Grid judged this, he used the hammer in his hand.

Ttang!

Grid hit the church's relic without hesitation! It was a sight that would make the thousands of members of the Rebecca Church furious. However, Pope Damian watched Grid silently.

Ttang! Ttaaang! Ttatatang-! Ttaang-!

It didn't matter that Grid used various tools on the holy sword. Damian didn't shake at all despite the sword being thrown into the furnace. He just watched as his trust in Grid was absolute. Ultimately, Damian had no choice but to trust Grid. After all, Grid had already demonstrated his power, having disassembled and assembled Lifael's Spear dozens of times while saving Isabel!

'By the way...'

30 minutes must've passed. Damian gradually started to feel anxious as he watched Grid. When Grid placed the holy sword in

the furnace, it maintained its full form instead of changing or breaking down.

‘Am I mistaken? Why does it seem like there is no progress?’

It didn’t seem to be a mistake.

‘Is something wrong?’

The anxiety that Damian felt was correct.

“Pant pant... Damn?” Grid was cursing as he hammered and used the bellows repeatedly. He was about to go crazy.

[You have failed to find the melting point of the metal that makes up the target item.]

[The smelting has failed.]

[You can’t find the binding section of the target item.]

[The disassembly has failed.]

‘Why isn’t my understanding rising?’

It might be a myth rated item, but Grid thought that his understanding of the item would gradually rise while disassembling the item. However, the method of understanding the holy sword was unconventional. Despite Grid’s repeated attempted disassembly, his understanding was kept at 7%.

‘I’m not hoping for 100%... I just want 99.9% or a clue toward cleansing the sword.’

No, there was nothing wrong with it.

‘Will it rise if I keep trying?’

Grid’s greatest strength was his persistence. Instead of feeling frustrated or demotivated after seeing his low understanding, he just controlled his emotions and started the disassembly again.

If he didn’t understand after disassembling it 10 times, then he would have to do it another 10 times.

If he didn't understand after disassembling it 20 times, then he would have to do it another 20 times.

If he didn't understand after disassembling it 20 times, then he would have to do it another 30 times.

If he didn't understand after disassembling it 30 times, then he would have to do it another 40 times.

Grid continued trying.

“Pant pant! Pant! Keok!”

Suddenly, something came to Grid's mind. Blacksmithing was a heavy labor class that required high stamina, and he felt like he was on the verge of dying.

‘Will I meet Khan if I die?’

“...id! Grid!”

“...Heok!”

Grid, whose tongue was hanging out like a dog, suddenly came to his senses. It was because a voice woke him up. He looked around and saw Damian right beside him with a worried expression.

“Shouldn't you rest now?”

“How long has it been?”

Grid routinely took a few days to make one item. He must've spent one or two hours trying to improve his understanding of the item...

“Huh?” Grid was looking at Damian when he became confused. The window behind Damian showed that it was currently the brightly lit daytime. “Have I been working all night?”

“It is already past noon. You have been working for 15 hours.”

“What?”

Wasn't it an hour or two at most? A chill went down Grid's spine.

‘Did I enter a trance state?’

It meant he had sufficient concentration. However, the efficiency was zero. His understanding gauge of the holy sword was still stuck at 7%.

“What...”

Grid became desperate. This was the first time he had gotten a horrible result despite having entered the trance state.

‘Dammit!’ Grid glared at the holy sword that was set up on the anvil. He didn’t like that it maintained a perfect state in spite of all his troubles. Damian sighed. “There is a saying that the holy sword is made from minerals created by the blacksmith god Hexetia himself. It is in the realm of the gods, so this might be difficult for Grid.”

“Hex what? Xe what?”

Ttiring~

[You have learned about the blacksmith god Hexetia.]

[Intelligence has permanently increased by 10, and the experience of all blacksmithing skills has increased by 2%!]

“...Eh?”

The acquisition of new knowledge was sometimes a great power. This was why people tried to read as many books as possible in the libraries of each city and kingdom. Grid was confused when he got the bonus effect of hearing about the blacksmith god for the first time.

[You have discovered the maker of the First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified.]

[Your understanding of the First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified has increased by 5%!]

[You have roughly identified the materials that make up the First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified.]

[Your understanding of the First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified has increased by 7%!]

These notification windows rose in succession.

“...Ah,” Grid moaned. Was he happy? Not at all! Grid tried to suppress his soaring anger. He smiled awkwardly and asked Damian, “What exactly are the materials of the holy sword?”

“I heard it is divine stone. As I mentioned earlier, this is a material created by the blacksmith god Hexetia himself.”

Ttiring~

[You have obtained information on new minerals!]

[The base of your blacksmithing technology is expanding!]

[You have discovered the material that makes up the First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified.]

[Your understanding of the First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified has increased by 15%.]

“...”

This was akin to doing something embarrassing when lying down to sleep like kicking off the blanket. Grid had countless similar memories, and one of those memories was when he first received Pagma’s Swordsmanship. He had followed the movements of Pagma’s Swordsmanship which had been drawn on the wall mural...

“Hah... XX!” He cursed properly for the first time in a while. Grid had forgotten the basics of a quest because the client was a player, not an NPC.

‘I forgot to get the minimum of information from the client...’

He was embarrassed and angry about having lost time.

‘...No, it isn’t my fault. Shouldn’t Damian have come forward and explained when he noticed?’ Grid trembled.

“Don’t be too sad. Sometimes things don’t work out. Why don’t you have a meal first and rest before working again?” Damian suggested with a smile. He didn’t notice that Grid was angry at him. “Ah~~ I’m hungry. What if my Isabel didn’t wait for me before eating?” Damian was about to leave the smithy with a wide smile.

“Wait there.” Grid called out to him with an eerie expression as he stared at the innocent-looking Damian.

“...?”

“You will sit next to me and not go anywhere until my work is done. Don’t even think about eating.”

“Hah?”

“Sit down and cough up all the information you know.”

“B-But...”

“How can you eat in this situation?”

“...?”

Why was Grid suddenly mad at him? Damian thought it was strange at first, then he realized...

‘He isn’t angry! My thinking was too shallow!’

The curse on the holy sword hadn’t been released yet, so how could the pope eat alone while an outside guest was struggling to solve the curse on the holy sword? The church members would be disappointed. They would whisper about how he chose to eat over tending to the holy sword. Damian would lose public sentiment, and his position would be lowered. He might even lose the pope’s position next year.

‘U-Unbelievable...’

Damian’s eyes became teary. He felt a deep gratitude and respect toward Grid. “Once again, you are saving me and teaching me great lessons! Truly... You truly are God Grid-sama!!”

“What? What are you saying?”

“Your humility...! Kuock!! It is truly amazing!”

“...”

It was clear that there weren't many normal people around Grid. Grid realized this once again as he threw the sword into the furnace. Then the smelting began. This time he wouldn't fail.

Chapter 881

‘It isn’t a dream?’

There was a black round table with 10 chairs around it. As soon as Coke returned to Reinhardt, he was called in by Lauel and couldn’t contain his excitement.

Demon Brain Lauel, Red Phoenix Godly Archer Jishuka, Lightning Flash Peak Sword, Cold-Blooded Prince Pon, Iron Fist of Justice Regas, and Bald Vantner—the people sitting down were the meritorious retainers of the Overgeared Kingdom. If one of them had been missing, the birth of the Overgeared Kingdom would be difficult. After Grid, they were the people that Coke respected and envied the most.

Then who were the owners of the remaining four empty seats?

‘Is it Faker, Huroi, Katz, and Chris? No, Faker might’ve rejected a place due to his personality... Perhaps it is Euphemina?’

Gulp!

Coke’s eyes shone like lanterns. It was a dream come true for him to be facing the top rankers in each field and the people closest to Grid. So, he was naturally nervous.

Clang!

“Ah! I-I’m really sorry!”

He eventually dropped the glass of water he was holding in his trembling hands and didn’t know what to do. While Coke was fussing over the broken glass, Regas smiled gently at him. “It’s okay. Don’t worry about it and sit down.”

Bald Vantner clicked his tongue. “Bah! This brat protected Queen Irene and Prince Lord? Isn’t the information wrong?”

“...” Cold-Blooded Prince Pon just remained silent.

“As expected from a Korean.” Peak Sword looked affectionately

at Coke. It was like reuniting with a younger brother after a few years. “Puhahat! Coke! I have been watching you from the beginning! The DNA of the Koreans which has evolved due to blood, sweat, and tears is the best! Puhat! Puhahat!! Good! I like it! Sign up for the Korean Patriotic Association! The membership fee is only 800,000 won per year! It is an opportunity to be patriotic for only 800,000 won!”

No, it was more like Peak Sword was looking at a pushover.

“...” Coke was embarrassed and disappointed by Peak Sword’s attitude.

“Everybody.”

‘Ah...!’

It was the voice of Jishuka, one of the most beautiful women in South America. Jishuka’s voice was a beautiful voice that seemed to stimulate the listener’s senses and take away their soul. What was she going to say?

Duguen! Duguen!

Coke was anticipating Jishuka’s words only to become embarrassed.

“Shut up.” The words that emerged from Jishuka’s lips were unexpectedly different from Coke’s expectations. “Aren’t you all going to shut up?”

“U-Uh...” The noisy Vantner and Peak Sword immediately shut up like cats in front of a lion.

Bald Vantner was considered the shield of the Overgeared Kingdom while Lightning Flash Peak Sword had beaten the Hero Kraugel in the National Competition. Yet right now, these people, who were big names in the world, couldn’t open their mouths before Jishuka.

‘She truly is the Red Phoenix Godly Archer!’ Coke was fascinated

by Jishuka's beauty only to come to his senses.

He reminded himself that she was the godly archer who had annihilated thousands of enemies with one bow in the Eternal War! That's right. The woman before him was the strongest in the Overgeared Guild that was swarming with monsters. It wasn't right to simply evaluate her by her beauty.

Coke unknowingly straightened his posture. Once the atmosphere was calm, Jishuka spoke to Lael, "Now, tell us."

Lael—he was the demonic brain who had used all types of ploys and tricks to give the enemies despair and eventually make Grid king! He was currently taking care of the government affairs of the Overgeared Kingdom. Feeling tense, Coke gulped once again. Lael showed a strange charisma as he covered half of his face with one hand. He truly was a chuuni. Anyone would be nervous when facing Lael.

‘Uhh...’

It felt like an eternity... Coke only met Lael's gaze for a few seconds, but it felt like hours had passed by. Lael's blue eyes contemplated him, and Coke felt like he had been stripped naked. It was a feeling that everything inside him was being dug up by Lael.

Gulp! Coke's throat was parched, and he swallowed his saliva as his tension reached the peak. Coke hoped that Lael would quickly explain why he had been summoned. Did Lael read his wish?

“You...” Lael finally spoke.

“Yes...!” Coke's voice cracked as he reflexively answered. His throat was dry, so it couldn't be helped. Lael sat with his legs crossed and his chin arrogantly raised. The smile on Lael's face could be seen through the gap in his collar. It was a meaningful smile.

‘What is he going to say?’ Coke had already forgotten his

excitement of meeting the meritorious retainers. The strength of the meritorious retainers was greater than he'd imagined!

Lael continued speaking, "You are Coke?"

"Yes! That's right!"

"How?"

"Huh?" It was difficult for Coke to understand the meaning of the question. Lael looked up and smiled with his eyes wide open. "The 10 meritorious retainers! Isn't this great!"

"Meri...torious retainers?"

"Kuk... Kukukuk...! That's correct. In the past, there were the seven malignant saints who worshipped the gods, and now there will be the 10 meritorious retainers who serve the Overgeared King."

"..."

Grid had told Lael the details of what had happened in the Vatican, and Lael was captivated by the name, 'the seven malignant saints'. He thought it sounded very nice and attractive. That's why Lael came up with the 10 meritorious retainers—the 10 meritorious retainers who served the Overgeared King and founded a new kingdom with him.

"Isn't it cool? The people of the world will praise our 10 meritorious retainers, and our reputation will increase. Then won't the authority of the Overgeared King soar into the sky? Huhuhut!"

"Ah, yes... 10... meritorious... retainers..."

What the hell did Lael want to say? What was his reason for calling Coke?

Stunned, Coke just nodded.

Meanwhile, Peak Sword whispered to him, "Be careful with your pronunciation. It is merit, merit. Not merid."

“...”

He felt like the 10 meritorious retainers weren't that reliable, especially Peak Sword. Coke looked at Peak Sword with pity while Lael finally cut to the chase.

“Sir Coke, I heard your saga. You said that you are a talented person who will beat the Red Knights on your own?”

“Huh? N-No, it was King Grid...”

“We have decided at the end of a meeting to train you.”

“...?”

“From today, you will be studying under the 10 meritorious retainers. You will learn strategy from me, archery from Jishuka, swordsmanship from Peak Sword, the spear and magic from Pon, martial arts from Regas, and how to use the shield from Vantner.”

The knight class could gain all types of mastery skills such as Sword Mastery, Bow Mastery, and Spear Mastery. It was meant to be a universal class, but there was a problem. The process of acquiring the skills and raising the level was very difficult.

It was natural. The experience of mastery skills increased only when using a weapon suitable for that mastery. How did they have the time to raise mastery skills levels for Sword Mastery, Bow Mastery, and Spear Mastery? Compared to some classes that only had one mastery skill, a knight's growth was much worse.

In fact, most knight players only focused on one weapon. It was a sword, a spear, or a blunt weapon. Only one weapon was used repeatedly in order to train that mastery skill. It was a class that needed decisions and concentration. This was what it meant to be a knight. Of course, as time went by, the skill level of the NPC naturally increased, but this situation was different.

“Thank you for the consideration, but I will refuse.”

Coke was a player. There was a limit to his time and growth. The

tremors disappeared from his voice for the first time since he entered the room. His unwavering eyes stared straight at Lael and the 10 meritorious retainers.

“So what if I have wonderful teachers? There are limits to the system. If I receive your teachings, the speed of my mastery skills increasing will be very slow, and I will eventually be a trashy jack of all trades. I would rather focus on swordsmanship like I have been doing so far. Only...”

“Only?”

“I want to get a chance to study strategies from Lael. As you know, knights can learn tactical skills, and it will be useful...”

“Huhut!

You are bold.”

He rejected the offer made by the meritorious retainers of the kingdom he belonged to and took advantage of a loophole instead...? Coke’s attitude seemed reprehensible. If this were any other country, the meritorious retainers would be furious. However, the meritorious retainers of the Overgeared Kingdom weren’t like this. Rather, they now had a better impression of Coke.

“Our personalities are similar.”

“Grid’s evaluation was accurate.”

“...?” Coke had been afraid of the reaction, but he ended up dumbfounded. He was perplexed about how the atmosphere had improved instead of worsening. Lael explained to him, “There are countless different options for items. Just as there are items that make the wearer stronger, there are items that can help the wearer grow.”

A typical example was an item that sped up the rate at which a skill level increased. It was an item that often dropped when catching low-level field bosses.

“We have prepared all types of things to help you grow.”

“I was yawning so much when hunting the petty field bosses.”

“The performance isn’t great, but it’s okay because we’ll support you.”

“There isn’t enough time. Let’s move to the hunting grounds right now.”

“Ah...”

They already knew everything and were prepared. Well, that was natural. After all, they were senior rankers and meritorious retainers of the Overgeared Kingdom. They knew a lot more than Coke. His heart jumped as he realized that he was being raised. However, there were some doubts in his mind that couldn’t be erased.

“Can I ask why you are doing this for me?”

The 10 meritorious retainers were busy people. They had to take care of government affairs and maintain their ranking, yet they were wasting time they didn’t have on him. Why? What was he supposed to say? Coke couldn’t understand it. Lauel replied as the representative of everyone present, “We have to turn Grid’s declaration into a reality. Won’t you be angry if His Majesty is misunderstood as a useless braggart?”

It was a simple and straightforward answer. Convinced, Coke shouted energetically, “I’ll do my best, so thank you in advance! 10 meritorious retainers!”

“...Let’s change the name,” Peak Sword requested, but it just passed through Lauel’s ears while he laughed.

On this day, the secret weapon development project of the 10 meritorious retainers began.

Ttang! Ttang!

[You have reached 60% understanding of the First Holy Sword that is Becoming Petrified.]

It was the third day after Grid started working, and this occurred after he had disassembled and reassembled the holy sword more than 100 times.

[The sin of the holy sword's maker is stimulating the Stone of Original Sin!]

“Sin of the holy sword's maker?”

The maker of the holy sword was a god—the blacksmithing god, Hexetia.

‘A god sinned?’ Grid was surprised by the unexpected development. The petrification process the reassembled holy sword was captured in real time. Proceeding much faster and wider than before, the petrification eroded the blade of the holy sword.

“What...?!”

Frightened, Grid started to beat the sword with a hammer. He intended to shock the petrified parts and reduce the progress of the petrification. However, the method he had been using for the last three days no longer worked. The petrification was no longer vulnerable to external stimuli. No matter how hard he hit it with the hammer, the speed of the petrification didn't slow down.

“Keuk...!”

Were his efforts for the last three days useless? Grid got a chill and used his last resort. He threw the holy sword in the furnace, deciding to remove the petrified stone in the process of melting it again, disassembling, and then reassembling it. Yet the sword which entered the blast furnace didn't melt. Instead, it caused a big explosion that shattered the furnace.

“What?”

Swept away by the impact, Grid was shocked. The half-petrified holy sword floated in the air.

-The sins of the gods are covered up? An unknown voice rang out.

Grid sensed that the quest he was carrying out had reached its main stage!

-You who have succeeded the power of the 4th evil, look at the sins of the gods! Anger seeped into the unknown voice.

Grid's vision flashed white, and his consciousness was transferred from the Vatican to an entirely new place. It was Asgard, the world of the gods. Simultaneously, at the head office of the S.A Group...

“This is the second time...”

What decision would Grid make? Would he align with good or evil? President Lim Cheolho's expression was full of tension.

Chapter 882

The role of the blacksmithing god, Hexetia, was to inform humanity of how to use fire and iron. Hexetia descended to the earth under the will of the goddess of life and faithfully fulfilled his role. He gave the concept of cooking and tools to the savage humans. It wasn't an exaggeration to say that the development of humanity was due to Hexetia, and he was very proud of this fact. He realized this was the reason why the gods existed, and it filled him with satisfaction.

However, it was only for a short time. Human beings were arrogant and evil. They would throw babies into boiling iron or cover the iron with the blood of virgins. Humans were uncivilized beings who relied on the gods and passed their responsibilities onto others instead of developing their own trivial skills.

“They are worse than the great demons.”

Hexetia felt only hatred toward them. So, he started to thoroughly ignore humanity. He didn't care when they reached out for salvation. It was the same even when the world was destroyed by the evil god, Yatan. Rather, he felt a great joy at the destruction of humanity. He hated humanity so much that he rebelled when Goddess Rebecca declared that she would resurrect humanity.

-In particular, he didn't tolerate Pagma.

Pagma, the legendary blacksmith who had developed without his help, was a mutation that denied Hexetia's existence. He was a human capable of developing without the help of a god, a monster who proved his potential was comparable to a god's. Hexetia became envious of Pagma and kept him in check. He placed all sorts of hardships and trials on Pagma so that he wouldn't be able to transcend.

However, Pagma overcame all the sufferings and trials. In the

process, he became transcendent—a stronger and more innovative being who wasn't bound by the 'mind.' At the time, the work born from his hands became a 'myth' and started to be compared to Hexetia's works.

-Hexetia went looking for Yatan. He wanted to destroy humanity right then and reset the world. Kukuk, isn't it funny? A god wanted the world to perish just because he feared a human would surpass him. A god isn't almighty or benevolent. There is an end to their talents, and they are terribly selfish, just like humans.

Asgard was the world of the gods that existed above the clouds. The voice echoed in Grid's mind as the golden area around him gradually became violent.

-They aren't qualified to 'manage' humanity! It is no different from breeding a dog!

"Kuek...!" A powerful rage struck Grid's chest. The unknown person's wrath, which Grid felt, was great. Grid's breath stopped, and his pupils trembled. He couldn't endure it! His vision from above the clouds spun round and round.

'My head!'

He had a terrible headache. Grid frowned as the surrounding scenery changed. He now appeared in a black and red world. Grid knew this place which was dominated by seething lava and poison.

'Hell!'

The earth was shaking, and the appearance of a volcano erupting was seen through the window of a dark castle. However, the two men standing opposite each other weren't agitated at all. Grid looked at them. The man with long red hair was the hero of this story, Hexetia, while the fair-skinned man giving off an ice-cold air was 1st Great Demon Baal. Baal looked like he was very interested. "You'll make weapons for the great demons?"

'What?' Grid doubted his ears.

It didn't make sense for the blacksmithing god, Hexetia, to make weapons for the great demons. Yet Hexetia nodded instantly. "Yes. I will give you strength. Therefore, destroy humanity."

Grid learned Hexetia's intentions and spat out, 'This crazy guy!'

Hating the entire human race was a good excuse. On the other hand, for a god to join hands with a great demon just because of a grudge against Pagma... It couldn't be accepted.

Baal delayed giving an answer. "The role of God Yatan is to destroy Earth..."

"Don't destroy Earth! Just have the great demons wipe out the humans!"

"Hmmm."

"Baal!"

"Ahh, good. Only..."

"...?"

"A one-sided entertainment is no fun, so I will balance it out."

"Entertainment? This is entertainment?"

"Yes, it's entertainment. It will be a good match between the incompetent god, Hexetia, and the human who incited his envy."

"Baal!"

"Enjoy it. It is enjoyable. Or do you think your god's position will be at risk, just like that time?"

"Ick...!"

'That time? What was that time?' Grid questioned it.

-It was the war between the gods and the seven half-gods, the mysterious voice gave the answer.

Grid belatedly realized, 'The seven malignant saints existed long before Pagma?'

-That's right. The reason I am showing you Pagma's era is to help you understand.

In other words...

-This was the second time Hexetia was jealous. He was envious of the seven half-gods who threatened his position as god and later committed the same sin. He's a really narrow-minded guy!

A chill went down Grid's spine as he was reminded that Hexetia was also jealous of him.

'This Hex bastard!'

Was Hexetia already plotting to hurt Grid? Grid was feeling concerned when the surrounding scenery changed again. It was now a place that was familiar to him—the Hall of Fame. The great demons who climbed up from the red-black earth faced a man. He was armed with a sword and a scythe as he watched the great demons with sharp eyes.

"In the end, I am alone."

The hand holding the sword wasn't very strong, but Pagma's black eyes which shone through his long hair were splendid as he started a sword dance.

"Drop."

The sky began to fall. The great demons felt an infinite pressure as the sky fell down right in front of them. The sky was falling while Pagma's sword dance destroyed the earth.

"If I knew that the distinction between good and evil in my mind was wrong, I would never have betrayed Braham." Pagma shed tears.

-Hexetia's envy brought sorrow to countless humans and threatened all of humanity. Hexetia's sins are truly heavy. Will you be able to forgive him?

"I..."

Grid was a powerhouse. He had experienced numerous battles, so how could he fail to manage his stamina? It was hard enough when the conditions were normal. Damian judged that Grid's physical condition was very bad. "I think you are pushing yourself too hard. Take a break."

Grid had been using all up his daily access time for the past few days. He had only eaten jerky and dried bread and hadn't left the smithy. Both his physical fatigue and mental fatigue should've reached the limit. While Damian was feeling concerned, Grid woke up.

"No, I'm fine." Grid shoved himself away from Damian's chest and stood up alone. However, his face was still pale and his breathing was rough.

Damian couldn't help worrying about Grid. "Please rest. Your health is much more important than the quest."

"..." Grid didn't answer.

To be exact, he had no time to answer. He was busy checking the notification windows in front of him.

[The original sin of envy has been revealed!]

[Unless the blacksmithing god Hexetia gives up on his envy, the Stone of Original Sin encroaching on the holy sword won't disappear.]

[If you pass on this fact to the Rebecca Church and its members, the Cleanse the First Holy Sword quest will end and you won't be able to receive the goddess' blessing. Affinity with Goddess Rebecca will drop to minus values.]

[If you bury the truth, the duration of the Cleanse the First Holy Sword quest will be extended indefinitely. You can receive the goddess' blessing after clearing the quest.]

[You have discovered the hidden story of the legendary blacksmith Pagma.]

[Telling this story to great magician Braham will likely cause a positive phenomenon.]

[The new skill Pagma's Swordsmanship, Drop has been acquired.]

[Drop]

[-A sword dance that displays a grudge against the sky.

It is a deep and serene sword dance that informs the world of the authority of the fallen sky.

-Inflicts 30% of your physical damage to all enemies within five meters of you, and there is a 30% chance of ignoring the enemy's status resistance.

-Deals an additional 300% damage to all divine beings.

That target that gets hit won't be able to attack, and their defense will decrease.

Skill Usage Conditions: Have a sword type weapon equipped.

Skill Mana Cost: 850

Skill Cooldown Time: 6 minutes.]

‘Braham...’

Grid didn't care that the reality of the gods was different from what was known or that the progress of the quest was becoming complicated. He wasn't even interested in the newly acquired sword dance. All he was thinking of at the moment was Braham.

‘Pagma regretted it. He felt sorry toward you.’

Braham had been betrayed by his only friend, Pagma, just because he was a demonkin. Wouldn't the grudges and sadness imprinted on Braham's soul be slightly relieved now?

‘I'm glad. I'm really glad...’ Grid sincerely felt pleased.

He wanted to quickly reunite with Braham and convey this truth. That's right. Grid didn't know that Braham's soul had scattered after leaving him.

‘Come back soon, Braham.’

Braham had left to recover his body. They were separated right now, but they would be able to reunite someday because they were living in the same era.

‘Old man, I want to see you.’

Their first encounter had been the worst, but Braham was Grid's mentor. Grid missed Braham's empty spot from time to time. Simultaneously...

“This is the place.”

It was Skunk, the 1st ranked explorer who discovered the Yatan Church's main temple in the past. He found the Sword Grave, where Braham's body was known to be buried.

“Now! Let's find the treasures!”

“Ohh!!”

Skunk and his colleagues started to move.

Chapter 883

Born as the son of a prominent filmmaker, Skunk had seen many masterpieces ever since he was a child.

In particular, he was devoted to the classics from one or two centuries ago.

A mafia boss who fought to defend his organization but conflicted with his family, a young genius absorbed in wealth and defending evil, an archaeologist—who while discovering ruins and treasures of the world—stopped the Nazis' ambitions, a middle-aged man who shaved his head to save a local child, and so on... The protagonists of countless movies impressed Skunk, and he was attached to them. Ever since he entered the drama department during his school days, he had walked the path of an actor, living various lives. Sometimes he had the life of a hero, sometimes a villain, sometimes an explorer, and sometimes a normal office worker or an unemployed youth.

He was very happy experiencing things that were different from his ordinary life. In particular, the life of an explorer encouraged him to dream of exploring the world and pioneering unknown land. However, this was rare in today's society. The earth had already been revealed by great people. The only place left to explore was the universe, but Skunk was a second-rate actor and rarely got the chance for space exploration.

Then Satisfy was released at this time. It was a whole new world! For Skunk, Satisfy was a land of opportunity. He became a young Indiana Jones and revealed many secrets about Satisfy over the years.

[The Great Explorer's Knowledge and Intuition has been activated!]

The Sword Grave—the place where legendary blacksmith Pagma was known to have spent his last years—was a vast plain. There

were thousands of swords stuck into the center of the plain, nothing else.

‘He spent his last years here?’

There wasn’t even the minimum of living spaces or any tools.

‘Did someone erase the traces?’

No, there were no such signs. It was likely that a living space on the plains hadn’t existed in the first place.

‘Then Pagma...’

Had he solved the problem of living in the middle of the plain, be it during spring, summer, autumn, and winter? Or had he been exposed to the sun and heat, the dry and cold, and the rain and wind?

‘No, I don’t think he is that unreasonable.’

There were no signs of any tools having been used. Skunk analyzed the area and found it was difficult to think that the signs had disappeared after hundreds of years of weathering. So, he could only conclude that no one had lived here before.

“There is nothing!”

“I feel the same way.”

“This isn’t a place where people lived.”

“The rumor that Braham was buried here is just that, a rumor.”

It was as he had expected. The reports from Skunk’s subordinates weren’t different from his. They couldn’t find any clues at the Sword Grave.

‘There are only these swords.’

Skunk grabbed one of the thousands of swords stuck in the plains. The sword didn’t budge. The swords here were just the ‘backdrop’ of the Sword Grave. It was impossible for players to physically influence them. One sword, two swords, three swords...

Skunk was deep in thought as he grabbed the sword sunk into the ground.

‘Are they real?’

A player could hold them and swing them.

‘Mysteriously, there are no signs of life, but shouldn’t there be some treasures?’

It was a place where Pagma was known to have spent his last years. Would the blacksmith have left any useful swords behind? This place was called the Sword Grave because it was a place where Pagma had discarded thousands of swords. That’s right. It was a plains area where thousands of swords were stuck in the ground. They were discarded swords because they had been useless garbage to Pagma. However, this was just from the point of view of a legendary blacksmith. In general terms, these waste products were great swords.

‘There is a high possibility.’

Wouldn’t the works criticized as failures by Pagma actually be epic or unique rated weapons?

‘It is amazing.’

A high-grade weapon from Pagma...! It was clear that the performance would be overwhelming. Even if the performance had dropped slightly, the historical value could be appreciated. As an explorer, it was a chance for Skunk to raise his reputation and skill level.

‘Money is a bonus.’

Skunk was filled with anticipation and shouted to his people, “Check the swords! Don’t miss a single one!”

“What?” Everyone was confused by the absurd command. They needed to check all the swords? These swords had been stuck in the ground for many years. They would be less valuable because

the blades were weathered.

‘How long would it take to check all of this?’

‘I don’t think it is very meaningful.’

His subordinates were dissatisfied, but Skunk was already taking action, carefully checking the swords stuck in the ground. Then it happened.

“What?”

It happened when he twisted the 134th sword. Skunk confirmed that an unexpected phenomenon had occurred. He twisted the handle of the 134th sword, and the blade stuck in the ground spun by half a turn. It wasn’t pulled out of the ground as Skunk had hoped it would be, but it was distinctively different from the other 133 swords that didn’t move.

Duguen! Duguen! Duguen! Skunk’s heart sped up. He couldn’t help feeling a sense of anticipation. As the sword rotated half a turn, the positions of the other swords changed slightly! The ground was moving!

“...Did all of you notice?” Skunk smiled as he exchanged gazes with his colleagues. Then he shouted as hard as he could, “Align them in a cube from now on! A few days—no, it might take a few months to prepare everything!”

“Ohhhh!” The talented explorers were burning with motivation and enthusiasm. Now that they had a clue, they wouldn’t give up until they found hidden secrets or treasures.

Every time a sword moved, the ground moved. The position of the ground moved depending on the sword. Sometimes, it was returned to its original position. It was quite a complex structure. As Skunk feared, they might be tied up here for a few months.

However, the eyes of Skunk and his colleagues were shining.

-Hexetia's envy brought sorrow to countless humans and threatened all of humanity. Hexetia's sins are truly heavy. Will you be able to forgive him?

"I..."

Grid had seen the reality of the gods. What decision would he make? Would he inherit the will of the fourth evil and rebel against the gods? Or would he act like he had done previously and turn away from the truth?

-The probability that Player Grid will inherit the will of the fourth evil is 61.8%, Morpheus's voice entered the ears of Chairman Lim Cheolho, who was watching the troubled Grid listen to the 7th evil's whispers.

Lim Cheolho responded with surprise, "61.8%? Then there is only a 40% chance that Grid will deny the fourth evil?"

The reward for the current episode Grid was experiencing was the '4th evil.' It was a reward which could be obtained when Grid declared that the gods couldn't be forgiven. The effect would be the strengthening of God's Command, which was what Grid had missed in the Crossroads of Good and Evil quest.

On the other hand, there was no compensation if he ignored the truth. The only advantage was that he could keep the goddess' blessing. Chairman Lim Cheolho decided that Grid was likely to agree with the 7th evil. The goddess' blessing was an excellent reward, but it was nothing compared to strengthening God's Command. Therefore, Morpheus set the probability as fairly low.

"Is it because he has already given up on becoming a half-god once?"

-That's right. When I analyzed Grid's last action, I determined there was a 97% chance of him becoming a half-god since he is a person who doesn't want to receive excessive penalties. Yet the result ended up differently.

“...It is because his colleagues might end up receiving penalties.”

Grid was concerned about his surroundings. He had already proved through several incidents that he values his family, friends and colleagues. The Grid on the monitor was responding, “I... It’s okay. I also feel envious of others. Do I deserve to condemn or forgive Hexetia? I don’t care.”

-You aren’t on the same level. You are human and he is a god. Hexetia’s envy threatens all of humanity. Will you still forgive the crimes committed by Hexetia?

“Yes, he is a god. That is why he is strong enough to threaten the entire human race with his envy.”

-...?

“If Hexetia was weaker than me, I might’ve rushed to condemn him. But isn’t he stronger than me? So I have to lower my tail.”

-You! You coward!

“It can’t be helped since I am responsible for my family, not the human race.” Grid’s smiling eyes became serious. “...Therefore, I want to avoid him right now. However, his envy might be directed to me one day. If he threatens my family, I will take responsibility. No matter how many times I fall, I will try again until I eventually destroy him. Is this selfish? What can I do? This is me.”

-.....

The 7th evil stopped shouting and started to disperse. The story of the past that was laid out before Grid ended. Grid had once again refused to inherit the will of the 4th evil. On the other hand, he received the hint that a god might become hostile to him. He had honestly and confidently expressed his opinion. Thanks to this...

[The 7th evil has become interested in Player Grid.]

[Affinity with the 7th evil has risen by 10.]

Things headed in a strange direction.

“Affinity with the 7th evil...? The intelligence of the seven malignant people—this intelligence that has been isolated for years has already developed to this extent?” Lim Cheolho’s eyes shook. He was obviously baffled.

Chapter 884

‘It is uncomfortable.’

Grid was in a sky garden with a panoramic view of the Vatican. He sat in the center of the garden which was carved in the middle of a mountain. As he sat alone at a table made of silver, his hair scattered in the breeze. His appearance was quite striking while he drank tea. The Vatican members present flushed red. How could the hero who saved the Vatican not be appealing? Yet, this view was quickly removed.

Spit! Spit spit spit!

“...”

It was because Grid spat out the black tea that he had just poured into his mouth. He couldn't enjoy this bitter taste, and his current appearance was far from graceful.

‘Ah! I forgot to add honey.’

Grid put down his tea and drank some cold water. He had been so deeply immersed in his thoughts that he even forgot to put sweet honey in the bitter tea!

‘Creepy. It is terrifyingly creepy.’

Grid was full of doubts.

‘Why do they keep trying to tempt me?’

The Crossroad of Good and Evil and Cleanse the First Holy Sword quest gave the reward of strengthening God's Command. This passive skill which deleted the 'cooldown' of a skill would then have a 100% chance of activating. The fraudulent nature of the enhanced God's Command could easily be inferred by even an idiot. It made Grid feel uneasy.

‘The S.A Group has been keeping me in check the whole time, and now they want to give me this...?’

It was strange.

‘A normal class user would gradually become as strong as a hidden class through steady advancement.’

Lim Cheolho had stated it directly, showing that the S.A Group was very sensitive about Satisfy’s balance. Even a legendary class couldn’t be the strongest forever.

‘Then why do they keep giving me a chance to strengthen God’s Command to a 100% activation probability?’

It was obvious that the power of Pagma’s Swordsmanship would be beyond imagination if it could be used twice in a row.

Kraugel, Agnus, and the dukes of the empire? War God Ares’ army? The true blood vampires? They were likely to all be equal in front of Grid.

‘Who can endure a series of blows from fusion skills, including Linked Kill Wave Pinnacle?’

The strengthening of God’s Command was no different than becoming invincible. It was a power that was far away from what the S.A Group was aiming for. Grid had no doubts about this.

‘Does the S.A Group want me to become a unique powerhouse in the world? No, it is impossible. The strengthened version of God’s Command is likely to be a trap. There must be a tremendous penalty.’

For example, if God’s Command were used a certain number of times in a row, his stamina would drop to zero and he wouldn’t be able to lift one finger.

‘I’m certain. The S.A Group wouldn’t give a benefit without a price.’

He shouldn’t be caught here. It was a trap. The S.A Group was filled with people who enjoyed watching the suffering of others, so he was likely to experience severe pain if he bit the bait. It was a

judgment that Grid could make due to being hit in the back of the head many times. He completely abandoned any lingering affection for the enhanced version of God's Command.

'In the first place, the goddess' blessing is more important.'

Grid had thought this several times, but there was a limit to the strength of an individual. It was much better to receive the goddess' blessing and enhance his blacksmithing.

'So I need to cleanse the holy sword...'

Was there a method to get rid of the blacksmith god's envy? Grid pondered on his worries for a long time.

"Overgeared King, here you are." A group of people approached Grid.

They were elderly people dressed in clean white clothes. These people were the elders of the Rebecca Church who only served Goddess Rebecca. The people, whom even the pope and the emperor didn't dare go against, gathered by Grid.

"Elders, did you come here to rest?" Grid spoke in a polite manner.

This caused the elders to laugh.

"Do old people need a break? We were just loafing around."

"We aren't as diligent as Your Majesty, who takes care of us like we are your family."

"...?" Grid was confused. The elders showed a great liking toward him. Of course, Grid had a high level of affinity with the Rebecca Church, but...

'Weren't these elders always nagging at Damian?'

Grid knew the tendencies of the elders. Didn't they treat even the imperial prince coldly?

'Of course, I helped them a lot...'

However, it was strange that they were only showing Grid this attitude. Grid once again felt suspicious. ‘Do they have other ulterior motives?’

Maybe they were trying to give him another troublesome task? The elders spoke unexpected words to the wary Grid, “Your Majesty is truly special.”

“Special?”

“Yes. You are a divine existence like a god.”

“...” Grid belatedly realized that the eyes of the elders closely resembled Isabel’s eyes.

That’s right. These people...

“You appeared with perfect timing whenever we were in danger, saving everyone like a god from a legend.”

“Right, right. You truly are a hero among heroes.”

“Haha...” Grid shrugged. He didn’t respond with much humility because he naturally deserved praise.

Were the elders exaggerating? No. There had been the incidents involving the evil Pope Drevigo, the pope candidate Pascal, saving Isabel, and now protecting the Vatican when it was attacked. Grid had appeared at the right time to destroy evil and save everyone. So, it was natural for him to be appreciated. Noticing that the elders’ affinity was at the maximum, Grid thought they could help him. “Do you know about the blacksmith god, Hexetia?”

“Of course. He is one of the six gods who serve the goddess of light. Hexetia taught humanity how to deal with fire and the usage of iron. Humanity was able to evolve thanks to him.”

“Yes, I see.” Grid nodded in response. He couldn’t express his personal feelings about Hexetia since he was in a position where he couldn’t reveal Hexetia’s true nature to the Rebecca Church. Still, he listened to the elders’ stories.

“However, Hexetia’s actions were all based on the will of Goddess Rebecca... In the end, the merit should be given to Goddess Rebecca.”

“Right, right. Didn’t Hexetia tell humanity about fire and iron purely due to the goddess’ command? The truly wonderful one is Goddess Rebecca, and Hexetia is just her messenger.”

The excited elders started to make a fuss. It seemed easy to guess why Hexetia was so easily jealous of others.

‘He has low self-esteem.’

Hexetia had taught humanity, but the one being appreciated was Goddess Rebecca, not Hexetia. In fact, Grid didn’t remember seeing any religion that served Hexetia. He had never even seen a statue of the blacksmith god.

‘I would’ve felt sad if I were Hexetia.’

Hexetia must’ve felt angry, yet he hadn’t been able to complain about the goddess. Then a human who threatened his talent appeared, and the various emotions became intricately intertwined, causing the arrow of resentment to point at humanity.

‘...He is pitiful in some ways.’

Self-esteem was important. Grid knew this better than anyone. During his unfortunate past, Grid had low self-esteem, and he had been overly conscious of others due to having been a victim and easily felt jealous of others.

‘Hexetia became crooked.’

Grid started to understand Hexetia. Of course, this didn’t mean he would defend Hexetia’s past sins.

‘...I need to comfort Hexetia.’

Once Grid started to understand Hexetia, he figured out a way to deal with him. Grid tapped on the table while the elders’ excited

chatter became background noise. He finally came to a conclusion. 'What if he is acknowledged now?'

If Grid recognized Hexetia's hard work and conveyed his gratitude, would Hexetia's twisted nature be eased a little bit? The moment Hexetia lost his envy, the holy sword would be freed from the curse.

'It is possible.'

The opponent was a god. It would be better to solve this amicably rather than by using a hostile method.

'Let's get rid of the sense of alienation.'

The method was simple, and there was also justification for it. Grid was reminded that he was a blacksmith and gave his opinion to the elders.

"I want to build a temple for Hexetia."

"Huh...? A temple for Hexetia?"

"Why do you need to do that? Serving Goddess Rebecca is the way to respect all gods."

"That's correct. Hexetia himself wouldn't be happy. He would be embarrassed."

The elders protested. Then Grid frowned. "Then what about the Dominion Church and the Judar Church?"

"No. It is different. God Dominion and God Judar are those who have many achievements, unlike God Hexetia."

"Then what about God of War Zeratul? I heard there are those who follow God Zeratul."

"Well, Zeratul's achievements might be small, but a god is a god... It isn't strange that there are those who honor him... Ah, I see. Your Majesty is a blacksmith, and you want to honor God Hexetia?"

“Yes.”

In the end, everyone was selfish. Grid made a bittersweet expression as he looked at the elders. With the benefit of hindsight, the elders started to agree.

“Well, the legendary blacksmith serving God Hexetia... I think it is fine in many ways.”

“That’s right. The meaning of Your Majesty’s service to God Hexetia means you will serve Goddess Rebecca, who Hexetia serves. Goddess Rebecca will be glad.”

“Yes, Your Highness. Our elders will permit the construction of a new temple. Build a temple to serve God Hexetia. However, you must build a larger statue of Goddess Rebecca next to God Hexetia.”

“Everyone shouldn’t forget that God Hexetia exists because of Goddess Rebecca.”

“...Yes, I will.”

It was necessary to get the permission of the Rebecca Church to build a temple serving a god besides Goddess Rebecca...? Grid nodded with a somewhat stiff expression after finding out this fact. He was blinded by the attitude of the elders who served Goddess Rebecca. Honestly, they served Goddess Rebecca to an extent that didn’t look good. That’s why he got goosebumps.

‘They serve Goddess Rebecca almost to the level of brainwashing. Yet I have reached a status where they are at the point of deifying me.’

In particular, didn’t Isabel worship him as much as Goddess Rebecca? Maybe...

‘Did I help the Rebecca Church more than I thought?’

He felt both glad and afraid. In particular, he didn’t want the goddess’ wrath to descend upon him.

‘No, now isn’t the time to think about it.’ Grid shook off his complicated thoughts and rose from his seat.

He would ease Hexetia’s envy by building a temple for him. It was imperative to confirm if this method would work.

Chapter 885

The Haalrune Swamp near Reinhardt...

Level 130–150 monsters occupied it in large quantities, and there were three types of boss monsters that appeared, making it a hunting ground with many users. There was the level 135 field boss, the swamp lion, the level 145 field boss, the mud lamia, and the level 160 field boss, the gigant minion. Each field boss gave a big reward, so it would be strange if they weren't loved. People dreamed of raiding the field bosses in Haalrune Swamp.

“...I thought it would be nice to meet a boss.”

At the center of the swamp, a party of 21 players with levels in the 140s fell into a panic. There was a swamp lion, a mud lamia, and a gigant minion in front of their eyes.

“...But how could three bosses appear at the same time?”

The boss monsters in Haalrune Swamp were known to respawn 36–80 hours after a raid. Additionally, the respawn points were random. In other words, the probability of all three boss monsters appearing in the same area wasn't high. The party had never planned to raid three boss monsters while hunting in the Haalrune Swamp.

“Kuek! We can't win! Everyone scatter! Retreat!” The party's leader, Hee Dongi, shouted as he defended against the swamp lion's claws with a Mass Produced Grid's Shield. However, the swamp added a big restriction on the players' movements. The party members couldn't escape quickly, yet the swamp lion and mud lamia could freely swim through the swamp and quickly catch up with the party.

“Kuack!”

“Cough! Cough!”

“N-No...!”

Hee Dongi paled when he saw the boss monsters start to devastate his companions.

‘We can’t avoid being wiped out!’

He resented the heavens. Who would believe that three boss monsters would appear in the same place at the same time? Was there anything else in the world as unlucky as this?

‘Shit! I normally go to church!’

The party leader blamed himself for his party members’ suffering. Then while Hee Dongi was feeling frustrated and guilty, new footsteps appeared at the scene. Unlike Hee Dongi’s party members, these footsteps were crossing the swamp at a very high speed.

‘Who? Heok!!’

Who was crazy enough to run here while everyone else was fleeing from the raid? Hee Dongi frowned and turned his head, only to become shocked. It was because the person foolishly rushing here was Overgeared King Grid. His sword, armor, cloak, and crown—which was the symbol of the throne—were dirtied with mud.

“Uwaaaack!”

This was a place filled with screams. It was where Hee Dongi’s companions were being attacked by the boss monsters. At such a place, Grid cut the swamp lion with a basic attack first.

“Pagma’s Swordsmanship.”

Then he took one step, and his sword descended.

“Drop.”

The sky was falling...? Hee Dongi and his companions doubted their eyes as Grid caused the sky to fall with one sword. The giant, intangible sword energy crushed the marsh lion, mud lamia, and gigant minion. Grid struck three field bosses with one sword

technique!

“B-Be careful!” Hee Dongi exclaimed urgently.

The swamp lion had been hit by Grid’s basic attack previously, so it now turned to grey. Meanwhile, the mud lamia and gigant minion still had some health left. Hee Dongi knew the survivors would react by hitting Grid. Then what was this...? The mud lamia and gigant minion didn’t dare strike back at Grid. They just stood there blankly. It was clear that they were overcome by an abnormal condition.

‘A boss monster suffering from an abnormal condition?’

Most bosses had high resistance to abnormal conditions. In particular, the gigant minion in the Haalrune Swamp was known to be completely resistant to abnormal statuses! Yet it was helpless in front of Grid’s attack. Grid dealt the finishing blows. The mud lamia and gigant minion died, and various enhancement scrolls and items were dropped.

“T-Thank you!!” Hee Dongi and his companions, who were able to survive thanks to Grid, shouted excitedly. They didn’t know that they would meet their king at a novice hunting ground. The party interpreted it as Grid patrolling the beginner hunting grounds for the sake of beginners and felt deep respect for him.

“Stay strong!” Grid cheered them on. He smiled and left after picking up the items from the boss monsters.

On this day, various Satisfy communities were bustling with activity. There was a post with the title of ‘The Overgeared King is a mighty person’ in each community. Grid’s heroic stories once again increased.

Grid returned from the Vatican and commanded, “I’m going to build a temple. Find excellent painters, sculptors, and architects for me.”

“You want to set up another temple?”

Reinhardt already had three Rebecca temples, and they had secured enough Rebecca priests and paladins. Yet Grid wanted to build another one? Didn't he know how much money it would cost? Was this really meaningful? Grid explained to Lauel who was unconvinced, “I want to build a temple for God Hexetia, not Goddess Rebecca.”

“Hexetia? The blacksmith god?”

“Yes.”

“Hrmm.”

Grid wanted to build a temple for God Hexetia whom no one worshipped...? Lauel thought about it before asking the reason and soon figured out Grid's purpose.

‘The Overgeared Kingdom is a kingdom built by a blacksmith... In fact, Grid has attracted and trained a large number of blacksmiths. If the Overgeared Kingdom doesn't serve the blacksmith god, who will? Additionally, serving the blacksmith god means the blacksmiths will be blessed. There is room for further development of the blacksmiths.’

There was a clear reason to serve the blacksmith god, and the profits from serving him would be great.

Lauel was thrilled. “How did you get this idea? Your Majesty, aren't you becoming smarter? Kuk! Kukukuk, a miracle is occurring in your body. It is a miracle that can raise a waterfall toward the sky...”

“????”

How was he becoming smarter? Grid was puzzled. That's right. Grid didn't even consider the possibility that if blacksmiths worshipped the blacksmith god, they might receive a blessing.

“His age is maybe in the mid-50s? His race is similar to Hispanics, and his red hair is like blazing fire. His eye sockets are deep while his eyes specifically are small and black. Is there a harsh shade...? His nose is a bit hooked, and his mustache and beard are long. Ah, the color of his beard is red.”

“...”

Picasso was the 1st ranked painter. Fascinated by the Overgeared Kingdom’s announcement of ‘looking for someone to paint a god’, she made a visit to Reinhardt. At present, Hexetia’s image was being born under her brush as she sat facing Grid. Grid added an explanation while confirming the progress of the portrait, “No. A bit thinner. His skin is thin, and his cheeks are slightly like a clown’s? Try to raise them a bit.”

“Like this?”

“It is very accurate. You are an excellent painter.”

“It is thanks to the system correction effect.”

“You are being humble.”

“...”

Picasso had a question. Grid’s description sounded like he had actually seen Hexetia as the description was so detailed and vivid.

‘Is it possible for a player to encounter a god? No, are gods real existences in the first place?’

The bigshots were truly different. It was clear that they lived in a completely different world from her. As Picasso thought this, Grid continued explaining to her, “His top is bare while his bottom half just has a gray cloth like a skirt. His dry and cracked muscles look like bark, but they are harder than steel. Ah, his nipples are burning.”

“Yes, I see. Are they these types of muscles? Yes. His nipples are burning. Yes...?” Picasso was nodding as she drew the god on the

canvas, only to become shocked. Her face turned bright red.

‘H-His nipples are burning? That isn’t possible! This is a gross sexual joke! It is sexual harassment!’

“...casso? Hey, Picasso.”

“Ah, yes! Yes?”

A famous person had changed into a pervert! Picasso was somewhat disappointed in Grid and felt embarrassed. Her blushing face looked like she was going to cry at any minute. Grid was concerned about her condition. “Why aren’t you drawing? Are you tired? Would you like to take a break?”

“N-No. T-That... It is hard to understand what you mean by nipples burning...”

“Hrmm... There were small flames on both of the red, inflamed nipples. There is a transparent blue flame on the left nipple and a transparent red flame on the right nipple.”

“R-Red inflamed nipples...”

“...?”

“N-Nothing! Nothing! I’ll concentrate!”

She wouldn’t allow any further sexual harassment!

‘Don’t show the opponent a reaction that he would enjoy!’

Picasso endured it with clenched teeth and started to concentrate on her work again. She made a great effort not to show a reaction that Grid would enjoy. Now, she couldn’t trust the image of the god on the canvas. It was hard to believe that someone who went around half naked with burning nipples was a god. Then what was this...? Picasso was faced with the truth the moment she finished painting.

[You have completed a new work!]

[It is the birth of a masterpiece that perfectly depicts the

blacksmith god, Hexetia.]

[Your reputation as the first human to recreate Hexetia's image will spread throughout the continent!]

[Many royal families and nobles hope to meet you! If you work as a royal painter, you can earn great rewards!]

[All stats will increase by 20 points due to the completing of a masterpiece.]

[The voice of the blacksmith god, Hexetia, is heard in your ears.]

-To reproduce my beauty so well... Hmm, it is quite good for a human.

[Affinity with the blacksmith god Hexetia has risen by 35.]

[The title, 'One who has Drawn a God,' has been acquired.]

“Rea...lly...?”

There were all sorts of unexpected rewards! Picasso felt dazed rather than happy. The hostility she held in her eyes when she gazed at Grid disappeared, and it was replaced by great respect and gratitude.

“Oh, your drawing is very nice. It is perfect. You have worked hard.”

“It was a work that was born thanks to your detailed information.”

“You are always humble. Well, okay. Lauel, tell the sculptor to reproduce the person in this portrait.”

Lauel replied, “Yes. Huroi is still flying him here. I will give him the commission as soon as he arrives.”

“Huh? Huroi?”

“The sculptor might be even more of a monster than Huroi... The problem is the high salary he is asking for. Don't worry and just wait.”

“Yes, I’ll leave it to you.”

Thanks to the good people, the temple’s statues would likely be completed easily. Then Picasso spoke to Grid, who was smiling with satisfaction, “That...”

“Huh? What's going on?”

“...C-Can I join the Overgeared Guild?”

“What? Of course, I would welcome you.”

“T-Thank you! I’m really happy!”

“I am really grateful.”

Grid and Picasso smiled as they faced each other. The sound of construction could be heard through the open windows as the construction of the Hexetia temple had begun.

Grid and the seven malignant saints...

Truth and lies...

Good and evil...

Grid strayed from various concepts imposed by the world view and pioneered a whole new path. It was unpredictable for the S.A Group, including Chairman Lim Cheolho.

“...I’m not interested in simple things.” Chairman Lim Cheolho smiled warmly as he watched Grid on the monitor.

Chapter 886

People who accumulated experience and skills in their field of expertise were treated with respect everywhere. In short, being at the pinnacle evoked respect. Picasso was at the pinnacle.

“It is an honor to meet you like this.”

“Please look after me in the future.”

The Overgeared Guild welcomed Picasso who had just joined them. The Overgeared members who had been scattered all over the continent flocked together to greet her. Despite being busy with maintaining their ranking and looking after their territory, they took a break. Of course, they also intended to visit the 10 meritorious retainers.

“Once you’re done in Reinhardt, stop by Bairan.”

“No, come to Reidan first. Jishuka, have you forgotten that Reidan is the second capital? Reidan is naturally after Reinhardt.”

“Reidan is too big. There are more than one or two facilities there, and it will take a long time. It is advantageous to start from the relatively small Bairan first.”

“It is a way of thinking that fits your rural tastes.”

“Rural? Hehe, our Chris seems to have grown up? It has been a while since you’ve had an arrow stuck in your butt.”

“Isn’t it funny to bring up the L.T.S days now? It is just like how you were tied up by Zirkan in the old days.”

“Zirkan? Why are you bringing up his name here?”

“You are overly fussy.”

“What? Is that what you should say to a young woman? Hey! Shall we fight for the first time in a while?”

“I will fight if you don’t use the Red Phoenix Bow.”

“An Overgeared member should be overgeared!”

A masterpiece was a great inspiration for people. In reality, millions of people saw masterpieces and gained the energy to carve out a better life, whereas in Satisfy, paintings weren't just for simple appreciation. A painter's paintings had many possibilities. If the portrait of a brave soldier were put in the barracks, the morale and training efficiency of the soldiers would rise. If a decorative painting were put in a restaurant, the chef's cuisine would become more delicious, and a cool landscape would reduce the heat encroaching on the city.

The better the artist's ability, the more varied and powerful the effect of the painting would be. In other words...

‘Picasso's joining is a huge event that will remain in our country's history.’

Picasso's value was difficult to measure. That's why Lael was very excited. A prideful person who rejected most requests had applied for membership to the Overgeared Guild.

‘Does this mean that Hexetia's painting was a special event for her? It is all due to King Grid's great description of God Hexetia.’

Lael was convinced of this. He knew that most people, including himself, were attracted to Grid or that they joined the Overgeared Guild because they wanted something from him. It was thanks to Grid alone that the Overgeared Kingdom could be created.

“Kuk...kukukuk! King Grid, you are definitely a man born from a star. I look at you and the memories of a former life that I have forgotten come to mind. You boasted a unique presence in a previous life. Like the sun... Kuk! Kukuk! I'm thrilled! My soul is melting!” Lael covered half his face with his hand while he shouted at Grid.

Grid felt the pain of having curled fingers and toes from cringing so hard for the first time in a while, but he didn't reply. To be

exact, he didn't want to reply. Grid's head was already busy enough. There wasn't enough room for nonsense.

‘Very good. It is more than I expected.’

The construction work for the Hexetia temple had started without a hitch. Grid sighed as he thought about the potential of Drop that he had measured on the way back to Reinhardt. ‘The motion is very short.’

There was just one step, or half a step to be exact. The skill was triggered by taking that half step and swinging his sword at the same time. It was almost an immediate-use skill. Drop was overwhelmingly faster than the existing sword dances which required 2-4 steps.

In fact, it was possible to connect it immediately after a basic attack! Moreover, it affected a target that was completely resistant to CCs. Theoretically, it meant an abnormal status could be applied to gods or dragons! What if Grid had been able to use it during the 3rd National Competition? He would've been able to show a spectacular sight going against the giant dragon as the whole world was watching.

‘It is a huge weapon.’

Grid was particularly looking forward to the fusion skills. Based on the fact that the motions for Drop were so short, it was likely to be easy to link with other swordsmanship.

‘Linked Drop, Kill Drop, Wave Drop, Revolve Drop, Pinnacle Drop...’

...They didn't sound very good.

‘It must be because I am Korean.’

If people from other countries listened to them in their own language, they might be wonderful and fantastic skill names! While Grid was trying to comfort himself, Picasso came up to him and said, “I want to draw you.”

“Me?”

A painter's 'drawing' literally meant a painting.

“Why all of a sudden?” Then the bewildered Grid shut his mouth. It was because he witnessed Lauel, Jishuka, Chris, Pon, and his other colleagues open their mouths with astonishment.

Lauel hastily whispered to him, -Just accept it! Her portraits are rumored to have a special effect!

-Special effect? What is it?

-I don't know exactly. It was a rumor that occurred after she was invited by nobles to paint their portraits. The truth hasn't been revealed yet. In any case, you can feel expectant. The great nobles of each country offered a lot of money to invite her and ask her to paint their portraits.

There were countless artists who could paint simple portraits. They were portraits which looked exactly like the real people or were better. These portraits were enough to decorate a wall, so any artist with decent talent could complete them. However, the nobles were paying attention to Picasso. The people speculated that there must be a reason.

-She has never done a player's portrait, so no one can see the hidden features of her portraits. You are the first one.

-Um... yes.

There was no reason to refuse. Moreover, there was a problem of etiquette before discussing the reason. Right now, Picasso was clearly showing goodwill to Grid. He wasn't cold enough to ignore the goodwill of his colleagues.

“Okay. Please draw me.”

Picasso had perfectly reproduced the image of God Hexetia. What image would she draw of him? Grid was slightly curious, but his expectations weren't great. He didn't even want it. After all, this

was his own ugly face that they were talking about. Grid hadn't been loved since childhood and felt embarrassed about his shameful appearance being put down on canvas.

“The welcome party is over, so let's move locations. I want a place where I can glimpse your true face.”

“My true face?” Grid was confused for a moment by Picasso's request but soon realized what she meant.

‘Let's go to the smithy.’

It was also time to repair the items he was wearing. Grid nodded easily and stood up. “Yes, let's move.”

“I don't know if it is right to judge him by human standards, but I personally sympathize with Hexetia.”

“Why?”

It was a very large smithy that could only be seen in the Overgeared Kingdom.

Picasso started drawing the hammering Grid while musing with a bittersweet expression, “I was the first person to reproduce Hexetia's image. This gave me a high affinity with him.”

Hexetia was a god who had contributed greatly to humanity's development. However, Hexetia had done it due to Goddess Rebecca, so humanity praised her instead. The people didn't even remember Hexetia. He had only appeared briefly in the beginning of the story before disappearing.

“I would've felt sad if I were God Hexetia.”

‘She saw it properly.’

An artist had an abundant sensitivity and a strong ability to empathize. Picasso questioned Grid, “Where did you see the appearance of God Hexetia? His image has never been reproduced, so how did you know?”

“It is nothing special. I naturally saw the god’s appearance while proceeding with the quest.”

“...”

He had seen the appearance of a god during the process of a quest. How many players could experience this? Grid had reached a much higher realm than Picasso had vaguely imagined. This was the reason why.

“In order for a painter’s work to be recognized as a masterpiece, several conditions are necessary. The first is that the artist’s ability must reach a certain level. The second is the artist’s intention behind bringing the painting into the world. The third is the artist’s mindset while painting, and the fourth is the value of the protagonist of the work. The value isn’t about the target’s identity or status. It means the weight of the target in proportion to the era.”

Picasso aimed for a new masterpiece by making Grid the protagonist. So far, she had only completed four masterpieces. Three of the four masterpieces showed the greatness of nature while the remaining one was the portrait of God Hexetia which she completed yesterday.

That’s right. She had no experience with her drawings of ‘people’ being recognized as a masterpiece. Her portraits of the nobles were excellent, but they weren’t evaluated as masterpieces. A masterpiece was something that had to inspire everyone. However, the reputation of the nobles wasn’t enough to be talked about by everyone.

‘Grid is different.’

He was a person who had established a kingdom, become the sky, and seen a god. It was Picasso’s judgment that the system wouldn’t underestimate his weight.

‘There will be good results for you and me...’ Picasso prayed as

she delicately drew Grid's image.

Grid hit the iron amidst the blazing heat as hundreds of blacksmiths watched him with admiration. He showed a dignity that wasn't inferior to that of God Hexetia.

On the other hand...

"You want me to show the flames using a surrealist method? Even the colors are different?"

"Yes."

Rabbit, the person responsible for the Overgeared Kingdom's politics and economy, was facing a sculptor. They were discussing the statue which would be built before the temple finished construction.

"It is a tricky request. There isn't a sculptor who will accept such a request! There is no inspiration!"

"Is it difficult to depict the flames attached to the nipples? I called you because I heard you were one of the best sculptors... Yet it is difficult to even depict the flames? Perhaps the rumors were exaggerated?"

"It might be easy for outsiders, but any expert will say that it is a difficult request. It is at a level that requires a fortnight of food and work! Do you know how many workers in the world are suffering because of vicious employers like you?"

"No, what are you talking about? Am I forcing you to stop eating and drinking? I will increase the deadline for making the statue, so please depict the flames."

"800%."

"...?"

"It is a bonus allowance. The employer's demands have increased, so isn't it reasonable to increase the benefits?"

"120%."

“Hey, why are you doing this? In order to improve the efficiency of the work... 800%!”

“120%.”

“800!”

“120!”

“...”

No matter how much time passed, there was no progress in the negotiations. They had met the right opponent. The enlightened Rabbit and the sculptor developed a great vigilance toward each other.

“Let’s change it to 600%,” Lael belatedly appeared and made a great concession in the negotiations. However, the sculptor was as stubborn as rumored. He maintained an attitude of not cooperating with the negotiations.

“799%!”

“...700%.”

“798%! I won’t go down any further! This is a 2% cut, not 1%. I won’t decrease it any further unless you give me a bribe!”

“Hah...”

Why were people in the kingdom like this? Lael had an excruciating headache from stress and nodded. “Okay. I will accept the 798% bonus allowance...”

“Oh, my~~ hehe! Thank you. I have already ordered the materials for the sculpture. I’ll use even more!”

“...”

Wasn’t this getting out of hand? Lael felt regretful as he realized the sculptor was more vicious than rumored, but it was only for a moment. Lael quickly forgot his regret. The sculpture born from the sculptor’s fingertips was so perfect and wonderful!

‘He is even more proficient than the rumours say!’

The sculptor was worth every bit of the money. It felt like Lauel was witnessing an item being made by Grid.

Ttang! Ttang! Ttang!

One was coming from the smithy and the other from the temple construction site—the sound of hammering resonated in Reinhardt and filled the Overgeared members. The blacksmith and sculptor sensed each other and had infinite respect for the other person.

Chapter 887

‘Painting isn’t easy.’

Ttang! Ttang! Ttang...

Grid had already finished working 10 minutes ago. He had completely repaired all the items he normally used. However, he didn’t stop hammering. He didn’t want to disturb Picasso, who was transferring his image to a canvas. Grid could feel the spirit of an artist from Picasso who observed him without blinking. He couldn’t help having respect for her.

‘Let’s think.’

What should he do until Picasso’s work was over? He didn’t want to make underwear in the painting, so should he make the mass-produced Grid items for a while? Grid thought about it before recalling the First Holy Sword. His understanding of it was at 60% after repeatedly disassembling and reassembling it in an attempt to resolve the curse. It was impossible to perfectly reproduce the First Holy Sword, but a ‘reproduction’ was possible.

‘I should use this opportunity to make a smaller holy sword.’

It would give him a glimpse of how powerful the First Holy Sword was.

‘If I’m lucky, my understanding will rise.’

Grid was filled with anticipation as he looked at the minerals warehouse on one side of the smithy.

“What do you need me to bring over?” A young blacksmith noticed and quickly came forward.

Grid frowned. ‘It is like I am a bully making them buy me bread.’

Now people were trying to do things for him. He didn’t even have to say anything. They just read his desires. It wasn’t due to his strength but pure goodwill and respect!

“Iron ore and mithril.”

“Yes!” The young blacksmith rushed to the warehouse at Grid’s instructions. After the young blacksmith returned with a large amount of iron ore and mithril, Grid poured the iron ore into the furnace he had heated up.

‘Of course, it is insignificant compared to the divine stone that Hexetia created.’

Among the minerals present on the Earth, those which could accept as much divine power as mithril could were rare. Grid planned to reproduce the First Holy Sword by using a minimum amount of iron ore and a large amount of mithril.

Ttaaang! Ttang!

He repeatedly smelted, tempered, and quenched the minerals. The iron ore and mithril which seemed to just be stones were transformed into a single blade through the process of smelting and hammering.

‘The First Holy Sword! I can perfectly reproduce its image!’

Ttang!

Extremely focused, Grid entered a trance state and thought back to when the holy sword was still in the hands of the Yatan Servants. He recalled all the impressions he felt when he saw it the first time, from the divine stone to the history and intentions of the First Holy Sword. Then he tried to completely reproduce the holy sword.

Ttang! Ttang! Ttang!

It wasn’t perfect, but he hadn’t ruined its essence. The appearance of the sword on the anvil wasn’t much different from the original. Still, there was a problem.

‘Ah, the divine power.’

It was the absence of divine power. The holy sword that Grid was

making resembled the original, but the divine power was incomparably weak. This was natural as there was a clear limit to the divine power in the mithril. The biggest feature of mithril was its ability to accept divine power. It was like the Divine Shield in the past where Grid had needed the help of a Rebecca priest to truly reproduce it.

‘I made a mistake!’

This was bad. The sword wasn’t a holy sword. He had actually overlooked an important part of its essence!

‘I’m really stupid.’

Grid was greatly disappointed in himself. He believed he was stupid because he had forgotten to ask for a priest for help. However, it was too much of a leap. Anyone could make this mistake. Grid had only focused on recreating the intent and form of the holy sword, so he ended up missing something.

‘...Sigh, yes. Calm down.’

Grid stopped hammering and took a deep breath to control his mind. The sword on the anvil was already half finished, but there was no need to fret.

‘I can ask for support from the priests at the temple.’

It didn’t matter if the temple authorities reported that they lacked manpower. He had other chances to try recreating the holy sword. Yes, there was no reason to be frustrated by one failure.

‘...Wait?’

Once his mind relaxed, his way of thinking expanded. Grid shook off his anxiety and was reminded of the advanced light elemental. He noted two possible methods.

‘First, there is the iron ore magic training method!’

Grid could train the iron ore using attack magic. The speed of the iron ore magic training depended on the power and skill of the

magic used. A slow speed made the magic training very challenging.

‘Now I have the elemental!’

That’s right. The second point that Grid noticed was the advanced light elemental.

‘Can I train minerals with the light elemental?’

Grid recalled the detailed information of the elemental.

[Light Elemental (Advanced)]

[You can use the advanced light elemental.

Current level of the light elemental: 1

-Available Elemental Techniques-

* The energy of the advanced elemental is infinite. An advanced elemental doesn’t consume the resources of the contractor.

[Sword of Light]

Makes the elemental into a sword of light.

It will follow the contract and help the contractor secure visibility in the dark. When an enemy with the attribute of darkness is found, it will move by itself and attack the enemy.

The attack power of the Sword of Light is affected by the contractor’s physical attack power and magic attack power.

* This skill can be maintained at all times. However, separate techniques can’t be used in the Sword of Light state.

[Flash]

The light elemental will ‘instantaneously’ move to the target pointed out by the contractor.

If the target is an enemy, it will shine intensely and blind the target for 0.3 seconds. The target can’t resist the blindness effect.

If the target is the contractor’s ally, it will shine brightly and give

the target a one-time 'dark attack resistance' effect.

Cooldown Time: 5 minutes.]

'This is it! I can use the Sword of Light to keep hitting the sword!'

Grid was neglecting the Magic Battle Gear Production Method due to the excessive labor required. In the past, Grid used a whole fortnight to train the metal with Magic Missile. He had used magic and mana potions, but his stamina had dropped and he had become physically and mentally exhausted.

Although Grid might be the master of labor, he couldn't endure the challenge of the Magic Battle Gear Production Method. Then what about now?

'I have the light elemental!'

The one using the magic was the light elemental and the energy of the light elemental was infinite.

'Let's melt the blade again. Then I will let the Sword of Light hit it 10,000 times.'

The completeness of the sword would increase due to the injection of divine power, and there was a high chance the level of the Magic Battle Gear Production Method would rise. Grid wouldn't have to waste any energy!

"Kukuk! Puhahahat!"

What idiot? Wasn't he a genius? He was very impressed with himself at coming up with the idea to use the advanced light elemental. Thrilled, Grid put his plan into action. He melted the sword and ordered the light elemental to train the metal. Then the struggles of the light elemental began. The white light sword hit the minerals on the anvil without stopping, and Grid watched with folded arms.

"What is that?" The young blacksmiths were surprised by the sight and started to mutter. They asked their seniors about the

new method Grid was using. Yet who could answer them? The blacksmith craftsmen weren't able to give an answer because this was their first time seeing a blacksmith use an elemental.

So, they could only silently watch the process. They couldn't even imagine what would be born.

“...”

Picasso put the finishing touches on the canvas. The painting was completed. There was an intense blazing red background behind a man with a crown who hammered away while dozens of blacksmiths watched. A brilliant light elemental surrounded the man.

‘What is the result?’ Picasso focused on the painting with a burning soul. She gulped and waited for a rating to be assigned to the finished work. Picasso had poured everything into this painting and thought that the level of the finished work was better than she had expected, but she wondered if the system would give the same evaluation. The result came out pretty quickly.

[You have completed a new work!]

[It is the birth of a masterpiece that perfectly captures the appearance of the legendary blacksmith, king, and Hero King who impresses all the blacksmiths in the world!]

[It is the first extremely honorable painting born in 177 years.]

[You deserve praise for your accomplishment in portraying the greatest character of this day to the next generation!]

[All stats will increase by 20 points due to the completion of a masterpiece.]

[All stats will increase by 50 points due to the completion of an extremely honorable painting.]

[The level of all class-related skills will increase by 1!]

[The class quest ‘Painter who will go down in History’ has been

generated!]

[The protagonist of the extremely honorable painting will feel deep gratitude toward you.]

‘Extremely honorable painting?’

What was this? Picasso was confused by the unintended and unexpected result.

[You have become the protagonist of an extremely honorable painting. Your appearance and achievements will be handed down to later generations unless the extremely honorable painting is destroyed.]

[Your current stats will be engraved on the extremely honorable painting. No matter what happens to you, you will be able to recover the strength stored in the extremely honorable painting if you recall your identity engraved in it. However, there is only one chance.]

“...?????” Grid had dozens of questions.

Picasso said to him, “Even the system acknowledges that you are the best.” It wasn’t an unproven speculation. Picasso expressed her deep gratitude to Grid, “Thank you for giving me the opportunity to draw you. I will never forget this honor. I will continue to serve the Overgeared Kingdom and repay this favor.

“...?????”

Grid took back the term ‘genius.’ He couldn’t understand the situation. Bewildered, Grid belatedly looked at the painting. Was he seeing things? Or had Picasso intentionally made him more handsome? The drawing which showed his passion while he smithed was extremely cool.

20 days later...

[A temple of God Hexetia has been completed in Reinhardt, the capital of the Overgeared Kingdom!]

[This is the first temple for Hexetia!]

[The artistic value of the statues which are perfect recreations of the appearances of God Hexetia and Goddess Rebecca have pierced the sky!]

[The new artifacts will enhance your insights. We recommend that you visit Reinhardt.]

All players currently accessing Satisfy had this world message rise in front of them.

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